

Between Dream and Deed:
The United Kingdom's 2001-2003 Preparation for
the Invasion of Iraq

by

KAROLIEN EMMA MICHELLE KEARY

2017

**Between Dream and Deed:
The United Kingdom's 2001-2003 Preparation for
the Invasion of Iraq**

by

KAROLIEN EMMA MICHELLE KEARY

Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

at

DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL POLITICS
ABERYSTWYTH UNIVERSITY

2017

To my grandmothers, who should have had a chance to study geography and languages.

Declarations

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

This thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. Where correction services have been used, the extent and nature of the correction is clearly marked in a footnote. Other sources are acknowledged by footnotes giving explicit references. A bibliography is appended.

I give consent for my thesis, if accepted, to be available for photocopying and for interlibrary loan, and for the title and summary to be made available to outside organisations.

The word count of the thesis is 90,397 words.

The views expressed in this work are the author's own and do not reflect the official position of the Federal Public Service of Foreign Affairs or the Belgian government.

Acknowledgements

When four years ago I pleaded with the department to get Hidemi as a new supervisor, I knew working with him would be an intellectual delight and suspected it would change the way I understood the world. It was, and it did. Since then, so much has happened. This project has at times been pushed to the background, and delayed, by a whirlwind of personal and professional events. I am profoundly grateful that Hidemi not merely stuck by me as a supervisee, but encouraged me in life as much as in this academic endeavour. Like a daughter, I hope to make him proud.

Huw is the supervisor any young person needs in today's academia: young, flexible, ambitious, easily enthused, and willing to help. He was a tremendous person to have on board for the subject matter of this dissertation, of course. I also am most grateful for his recommendation for the Joint Services Command and Staff College and his understanding of the ropes of modern-day academia. 'What would Huw do?' is a test that will continue to serve me well.

If someday I return to academia, it will be because of the joy of intellectual exchanges like the one I had with Christian Enemark during my IPRS. Thank you. I would also like to thank my examiners for agreeing to read the thesis and their thoughtful comments. The thesis is much stronger as a result.

I wish my grandmother had lived to see the results of the many days I spent in her house going through thousands and thousands of pages of source material.

The Aberystwyth Debating Union has been like family, as have some friends in the department. You have given me a university education in the true sense of the word.

I want to thank my parents and family for supporting me throughout the program and when the PhD was put on the backburner for other plans.

Michael would probably want me to point out that he believed in my PhD before it was cool. Thank you for reading, and rereading, and looking after baba during the weekends.

No thanks to Sebastiaantje and the new Little One, because even though you are super adorable and I love you to bits, Pippi, Mila, and you both just made it so much harder.

Abstract

This dissertation describes how it came about that the British government, civil service and military were prepared badly for the 2003 invasion of Iraq. Its new analysis of this often-discussed period centres on the plans prepared in 2002 by the various government departments involved; those plans were not suitable for the policy that the British government eventually pursued in the beginning of 2003. This mismatch occurred because although Britain's post-9/11 Iraq policy was understood across Whitehall and Downing Street, its limits were not. Specifically, there was no clarity on the circumstances under which a policy should be abandoned, and if so, for what alternative. The assumptions made about those elements varied across actors. This resulted in internally contradictory British plans, unsuitable for the invasion as it happened. A relatively simple mechanism that can limit, though not eliminate, these problems in future policy-making is the so-called 'preferred alternative to the pursued policy', derived from the 'best alternative to a negotiated agreement' (BATNA). BATNAs are a well-known concept in negotiation practice and doctrine; I argue that similarly, 'preferred alternatives' can and should be used in a policy-making context for keeping policy and policy plans aligned and coherent across members of government and their civil service departments. The original contribution to knowledge is both a new interpretation of the reasons for Britain's difficulties in Iraq, and a new argument about how to improve policy-making through a new application of an already successful tool, the 'preferred alternative to the pursued policy'.

Table of Contents

Declarations	4
Acknowledgements	5
Abstract.....	6
Table of Contents.....	7
Introduction: Between Dream and Deed	11
1. Between dream and deed	11
2. The curious failure to be prepared	12
3. Unjustified assumptions determine incoherent plans.....	16
4. Scope and argumentative burden	22
5. Dissertation structure	28
6. Conclusion.....	31
Chapter I: Understandings of the Iraq War.....	32
1. Introduction	32
2. The British invasion of Iraq: explanations in the FPA literature.....	34
3. British case for war	41
4. Why did the US go to war?.....	46
5. American planning for the post-invasion phase	51
6. The British failure to be prepared: the contribution of this dissertation.....	59
7. Conclusion.....	62
Chapter II: The Importance of Knowing What You Want.....	67
1. Introduction	67
2. Best alternatives in negotiations: the original concept.....	68
3. Preferred alternatives in foreign policy decision-making	71
4. Transferability of the concept.....	73
5. Preferred alternatives and poliheuristic theory	76
6. Preferred alternatives in foreign policy: other benefits	82
7. Practical use of the preferred alternative in foreign policy-making.....	86

8. British Iraq policy from 2001 to 2003.....	88
9. Methodology.....	90
10. Conclusion.....	92
Chapter III: Deciding on War.....	96
1. Introduction	96
2. From 9/11 to Crawford	97
3. From commitment to policy	110
4. Endgame	121
5. Conclusion.....	136
Chapter IV: Preparing for War.....	140
1. Introduction	140
2. Ministry of Defence	140
3. Department for International Development.....	159
4. Foreign and Commonwealth Office	169
5. Cabinet Office.....	179
6. Conclusion.....	180
Chapter V: Fighting the War	184
1. Introduction	184
2. Here we are now... the post-war phase	185
3. Assumptions versus reality: a comparison	192
4. From bad preparation to insurgency.....	206
5. Conclusion.....	208
Chapter VI: The Relation Between ‘Why’ and ‘How’ London Went to War.....	210
1. Introduction	210
2. London did not have a clear policy position	212
3. London goes to war... ..	223
4. ... without good plans	229
5. Conclusion.....	240
Conclusion: Failure to Prepare Well.....	243

1. Introduction	243
2. Findings.....	244
3. Implications	248
4. New understandings about the foreign policy-making process	251
5. Limitations	252
6. Conclusion.....	255
Bibliography.....	257

Introduction: Between Dream and Deed

1. BETWEEN DREAM AND DEED

‘Between dream and deed / the law still stands / and practicalities’. This is how Willem Elsschot, one of the greatest writers in the Dutch-speaking world, described an old man’s unfulfilled desire to kill his wife.¹ This dissertation is not about poetry, nor is it about marriage; but it is about the wide gap between dreams and deeds because of practicalities, including the law. Specifically, this dissertation describes Britain’s failure to prepare well for its own invasion of Iraq, in particular the post-invasion phase. This failure is well-known but nonetheless remarkable, because Tony Blair’s government committed itself to (a) a politically dangerous invasion (b) out of choice. This voluntary choice for a risky policy meant that Tony Blair and his government had every incentive to get this invasion right. Yet while the overthrow of Saddam Hussein’s regime succeeded, the British and Americans alike were criticised for a severe lack of post-war planning. How did this lack of good planning come about? In other words, how can this gap between incentives and results – between dream and deed – be explained?

To answer that question, this dissertation describes Whitehall’s planning failure. It traces the planning done by Whitehall departments and its relation to the political decision-making process. More specifically, it shows how a widespread lack of clarity about the (political) policy choices reverberated through the civil service, impeding its capacity to prepare relevant policies. The empirical chapters demonstrate that the different departments involved in the planning had a different understanding of the policy they were pursuing. They also had different understandings of their respective roles. Those departments – the Ministry of Defence, the Foreign Office, the Department for International Development, and the Cabinet Office – had different assumptions on which they based their plans. These assumptions were often not applicable to the policy and events as they eventually played out; many also were mutually contradictory. The plans resulting from those differing assumptions were equally incoherent, underdeveloped, and unsuited for the invasion as it happened.

Secondly, this dissertation puts forward an argument about how these differing and unsuitable assumptions came about and led to mispreparation. That argument focuses on the role of ‘preferred alternatives to the pursued policy’ and ‘minimal requirements’ – concepts loosely based on insights from the Harvard Negotiation Project – in developing a coherent

¹ Willem Elsschot, *Verzameld Werk* (Amsterdam: Querido, 1976).

policy position. The argument is quite simply that policy-makers should determine not only their policy goal and strategy when making policy, but also give thought to - and achieve a measure of agreement on - their preferred alternative if the original policy were to fail, and to the conditions they wish to attach to the original policy. A good understanding of one's preferred alternative and minimal requirements can be as important in policy-making as a good understanding of one's goal and strategy; but the importance of the former two concepts - and how they can help improve policy - is much less well understood. This dissertation will demonstrate how and why they matter. It does so for the case of the British 2003 war in Iraq.

The lack of a well-defined preferred alternative constitutes a suboptimal way of making policy, which in turn has the propensity to bring about suboptimal policy outcomes. This argument amounts to a prudential guideline, applicable to all foreign policy-making in uncertain circumstances.² It is not tied to any conditions particular to the case of British Iraq policy. How and how far this propensity manifests itself is a matter of contingency; in the Iraq case, it manifested itself very explicitly, which makes this case a good type study of this prudential guideline: it should just how important it potentially is to clearly define one's preferred alternative. In the 2001-2003 preparation for the invasion of Iraq, as will be shown, the failure to follow this guideline was the root cause of a litany of policy planning problems Britain encountered, and of the weakness and unsuitability of the resulting plans.

This introductory chapter has four goals and four corresponding sections. The first is to introduce the research question. What exactly is curious about London's lack of preparation? What is to be explained in this dissertation, and how is the task taken on here different from the wider literature that precedes it? The second section introduces the arguments. It gives an outline of the types of mistakes that were made as Britain decided on and prepared for war. It also presents the central thesis and explains the concepts of the 'preferred alternative' and 'minimal requirements' in more detail. Thirdly, the introduction identifies the argumentative burdens required by the thesis: what questions must this dissertation address to warrant the central claims set out in the second section? What falls within the scope of this dissertation and what is explicitly not covered? The fourth section, finally, gives the chapter outline and details how the six chapters relate to those argumentative burdens and the thesis as a whole.

2. THE CURIOUS FAILURE TO BE PREPARED

² I would like to specifically thank Hidemi Suganami for helping me clarify this line of thought.

In December 2015, British parliament voted on intervention in Syria to fight Islamic State.³ In many ways, it was a debate shaped by the intervention of Iraq more than 12 years before - not only because the Iraq war continues to shape British political debate, but also because the Sunni jihadist group was created in 2006 post-invasion Iraq.⁴ The 2003 invasion remains contentious for at least four distinct reasons. The first is the fact that the government went to war at all: the invasion itself - its reasons, its wisdom, its feasibility - was contested. The second is the widespread impression that the British public was misled, and popular opinion ignored.⁵ Thirdly, the military campaign itself has sparked big debates, over British counterinsurgency capacity, over the readiness of the Defence Forces, over British grand strategy.⁶ The current problems in and around the Iraqi territory only magnify the importance of these debates. The importance and limits of the 'special relationship' with the United States remain another area of debate.⁷

One of the controversies surrounding the invasion concerns how badly prepared London (like Washington) seemed for the aftermath of Saddam Hussein's fall. Military victory was swift, but afterwards the security situation deteriorated, the political process proved difficult to say the least, and the coalition's engagement in Iraq was longer than either capital would have envisaged when their troops undertook the race to Baghdad. Events in the last decade have led to the now-common understanding that top-down democratization of a foreign country is a risky and expensive undertaking. It is easy to argue that the expectations set for Iraq were exceedingly high and optimistic. Yet at the same time, the United States and its junior partner have faced severe criticism for their lack of preparedness for their own undertaking. In other words, the problem with the Iraq war was *not* just that the Western coalition set out to fulfil a highly ambitious, massive goal; it is also that they seemed severely underplanned, understaffed and underfunded to do so. As testified by government officials, journalists, and academics alike, plans for the immediate post-warfighting phase were lacking in almost every dimension (with the exception perhaps of humanitarian provisions).⁸

³ Andrew Sparrow and Frances Perraudin, "Cameron Wins Syria Airstrikes Vote By Majority Of 174 - As It Happened," *The Guardian*, December 3, 2015, <http://www.theguardian.com/politics/blog/live/2015/dec/02/syria-airstrikes-mps-debate-vote-cameron-action-against-isis-live>.

⁴ David Cameron, Hansard Parliamentary Debates: 2 December 2015, Column 339 (2015).

⁵ For example by Eric Herring and Piers Robinson.

⁶ For example by Warren Chin and Paul Dixon.

⁷ For example by Patrick Porter and Tim Dunne.

⁸ See for example:

Frederick Viggers, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry," December 8, 2009.

Hilary. Synnott, *Bad Days in Basra : My Turbulent Time as Britain's Man in Southern Iraq* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2008).

This dissertation aims to explain how it came about that London failed to prepare properly for its invasion of Iraq, in particular for the phase immediately after the deposing of the old regime. This failure itself has been described extensively: wide-spread criminality and looting, unsecured arms dumps, public services that stopped working, severely damaged infrastructure, and a lack of troops, expertise and money to deal with the problems.⁹ We have some understandings of its causes. The preparation was severely flawed. It was characterized by a lack of troops, lack of civilian experts, lack of money, lack of time.¹⁰ The invading troops emphatically did *not* hit the ground running. They failed to ensure security and quick improvements of daily life in the very beginning of the post-invasion phase.¹¹ Quickly, events began spiralling out of control. Shortly afterwards, Sunni discontent began to transform into an insurgency. The British and American war effort over time morphed into full-blown counterinsurgency operations.¹²

Yet if this lack of preparedness is well-known, it also remains curious. Just as it is generally recognised that Britain was not prepared for Phase IV of the war – the post-invasion phase – it is also recognised that the Iraq war was a war of choice. Even those who advocated the war have acknowledged that 9/11 changed their assessment of the risk posed by Iraq, and their window of opportunity to deal with Saddam Hussein, but that nothing had changed in Baghdad *per se*.¹³ In other words, the coalition has substantial leeway in going to war at a moment of its choosing. The timeline was not driven by the Iraqis.

In addition, the war was a major political gamble for Blair. He had staked his premiership on the invasion. He ignored one of the biggest mass protests in history to do what he believed to

Tim Cross, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 7 December 2009," 2009.

Clare Short, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 February 2010," 2010.

David Mitchell and Tansa George Massoud, "Anatomy of Failure: Bush's Decision-Making Process and the Iraq War," *Foreign Policy Analysis* 5, no. 3 (2009): 265–85.

⁹ Nicholas E. Reynolds, *Basrah, Baghdad, and Beyond* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 2005), 143–144.

Dominick Chilcott, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009," 2009.

Suma Chakrabarti, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009," 2009.

Cross, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 7 December 2009."

Desmond Bowen, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 7 December 2009," 2009.

Mike Rossiter, *Target Basra. The High-Octane Story of the Royal Marine Commandos in Iraq* (London: Bantam, 2008), 263–264.

Andrew Alderson, *Bankrolling Basra* (London: Robinson, 2007), 15–16, 18–22, 26–38.

¹⁰ Cross, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 7 December 2009."

¹¹ Viggers, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry", 1–7.

¹² Warren Chin, "Why Did It All Go Wrong? Reassessing British Counterinsurgency In Iraq," *Strategic Studies Quarterly* 2, no. 4 (2008): 119–35.

¹³ Tony Blair, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 29 January 2010," 2010, 10, 72–73.

be right.¹⁴ He was not a poodle of Bush, as may have been suggested in the first reading of history.¹⁵ On the contrary, Bush and his administration repeatedly offered Blair a way out of his commitment.¹⁶ Nonetheless, the Prime Minister was committed to the war even as Cabinet was unhappy, Parliament was close to revolt, and everyone was doubtful about the legality of the war.¹⁷ He offered the biggest contribution that Britain was capable of, because if the war was worth doing, it was worth doing well.¹⁸ So why was it not done well?

The failure was not a matter of unforeseen problems. Of course, some problems were less severe than foreseen (notably the humanitarian problems) and others were more severe (the amount of looting) but concerns about the quality of the planning and the plans were raised time and again before the invasion. When confronted with the post-war difficulties, several witnesses to the Iraq Inquiry have argued that war is complicated. It is, even with the best laid plans. One cannot expect perfection or even anything close to it. Plans change and might prove irrelevant; **however, they should at least be developed and internally consistent. In the case of the invasion of Iraq, as shown in the following chapters, they were not.** How did this come about?

This mismatch between ambitions and plans has been addressed – implicitly or explicitly – in existing Iraq writings and debates in various ways. However, apart from *High Command*, that focuses on the Ministry of Defence, little work has focused on examining how the plans were actually made (and that work analysed Iraq policy at the level of one department, not across departments).¹⁹ This means that our understanding of the planning failure remains limited. Those works that explain the failure of the invasion are important but not quite relevant to the question discussed in this dissertation: the success of the invasion and the quality of the preparation are plausibly related, but nonetheless distinct issues. To say that any invasion of Iraq would have failed regardless of how good the planning was, for example, does not address whether, how and why the plans were bad. The question about the post-war plans in specific thus remains. Several works have specifically address the failure of the post-war

¹⁴ Rajeev Syalm, Andrew Alderson, and Catherine Milner, "One Million March Against War," *The Telegraph*, February 16, 2003, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1422228/One-million-march-against-war.html>.

¹⁵ Samuel Azubuike, "The 'Poodle Theory' and the Anglo-American 'Special Relationship,'" *International Studies* 42, no. 2 (2005): 123–39.

¹⁶ Blair, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 29 January 2010", 129.

Chilcott, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 26.

¹⁷ Jack Straw, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 February 2011," 2011, 104.

¹⁸ Kevin Tebbit and Michael Boyce, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 3 December 2009," 2009, 40.

Kevin Tebbit, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 3 February 2010," 2010, 39–40.

¹⁹ Christopher L. Elliott, *High Command: British Military Leadership in the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars* (London: C. Hurst & Co, 2015).

plans, describing the post-war chaos and the lack of plans.²⁰ However, by not focusing on the origins of these plans, they do not address the precise nature nor roots of the planning failure; this dissertation aims to do so.

Two common assumptions nonetheless underlie many interpretations of the planning failure: the plans were bad because they were rushed, or/and the plans were bad because of the way in which Tony Blair made and imposed decisions. These interpretations are not wrong, as this dissertation confirms. Nor, however, are they particularly informative. Attributing the war to the Prime Minister, for example, fails to address that the plans were not drawn up by him; nor could he single-handedly decide on war. Causal chains remain under-analysed. This limits our understanding of the war itself and the lessons we can learn. The idea of the plans being underdeveloped because of lack of time is similarly unsatisfactory, for several reasons. It does not explain why the British were ready for one part of the war (the fighting) but not the other (the phase immediately after the fighting). It fails to engage with the observation that the British government had every incentive to do this invasion well, and that there were clear warnings beforehand that the civil service was not ready. A closer look at the preparation moreover reveals that the British were not merely *underprepared*; they were also *misperpared*. More analysis is thus warranted.

3. UNJUSTIFIED ASSUMPTIONS DETERMINE INCOHERENT PLANS

Britain was curiously unprepared for the invasion of Iraq, in particular the phase immediately after Baghdad was toppled. How did this come about? This dissertation's thesis is that **London failed to prepare well for the post-warfighting phase of the invasion of Iraq because it failed to have a clear policy position. More specifically, there was no common understanding across the government on the minimal requirements of the pursued policy nor on the preferred alternative if this first policy was to fail. This lack of clarity meant that the departments and people involved prepared on the basis of mutually incompatible, unsuitable assumptions. This in turn led to plans that were internally contradictory and unsuited for the invasion as eventually pursued by the British government.** In other words, the lack of agreed-upon preferred alternative and

²⁰ For example:

Reynolds, *Basrah, Baghdad, and Beyond*.

Rossiter, *Target Basra. The High-Octane Story of the Royal Marine Commandos in Iraq*.

Alderson, *Bankrolling Basra*.

minimal requirements was the root cause for the problems in the policy-making process and the plans that resulted from it.²¹

In the beginning of the 2000s, British Iraq policy was stable and had been roughly the same since the 1991 Gulf War. The United Kingdom was concerned with containing Saddam Hussein, who ruled his country with an iron fist, persecuted various ethnic groups and had waged war on both Kuwait and Iran. The primary goal of containment was to prevent the regime in Baghdad from developing weapons of mass destruction. However, the sanctions proved less tight than hoped, but still caused mass suffering amongst the Iraqi population. For this reason, the British government had started revising its Iraq policy. In addition, the government was led by Tony Blair. He had gained experience in interventionist foreign policies by previous military interventions, notably in Iraq (1997) and Kosovo (1999), Sierra Leone and East Timor (2000). He also maintained a firm commitment to the 'special relationship' with the United States and only qualified support for the United Nations, which he believed sometimes failed to fulfil its ethical duties of intervention.

Then 9/11 occurred and was a catalyst for foreign policy change in the United States. Afghanistan was invaded – with the support of the Security Council and the military involvement of the United Kingdom – and not much later, the Bush administration turned its attention to Baghdad. The Americans' apparent commitment to decisively dealing with Saddam Hussein – a policy that would amount to the active pursuit of regime change, which had been its stated long-term aim since Clinton (albeit not, at that time, through military intervention, but rather through supporting Iraqi opposition groups) – faced London with a choice regarding its own policy. Containment was replaced by the goal of disarmament, via the usual route of the Security Council. This amounted to a dual commitment to, on the one hand, disarming Baghdad (and to support the Americans in their regime change plans to achieve this disarmament) and, on the other hand, pursuing the United Nations route.

For the Prime Minister, the primary commitment – and the ethical obligation – was to deal with Baghdad and stand by the United States. For the Foreign Office, the primary commitment was to the Security Council route, which in any case was the only way in which an invasion could be legal. The issue of what would happen if these two goals proved incompatible remained unresolved until immediately before the invasion. In other words,

²¹ Throughout this dissertation, I will be referring to the 'preferred alternative' used by various government departments in their policy-making. In using this terminology, I do not mean to convey that these were their *own* preferences; rather, these are the preferred alternatives that they presumed were held *by the decision-makers*.

while there was a clear strategy – compelling Saddam Hussein to disarm via the Security Council – there was no defined preferred alternative if a negotiated agreement through the Security Council were to fail. Similarly, London’s conditions or minimal requirements for pursuing this goal and strategy were unclear, both in London and to those diplomats who were pursuing them.²² At various moments in time London put various conditions on any participation in an invasion, but it usually remained unclear whether these ‘conditions’ constituted actual firm conditions *sine qua non* or something closer to wish lists. London had no clear conception of the circumstances under which the primary policy ought to be abandoned, and what it ought to be abandoned for in that case.

The idea of the preferred alternative used in this dissertation is loosely based on that of the ‘best alternative to a negotiated agreement’ (or BATNA) developed by the Harvard Negotiation Project. It functions as a similar tool in a different context, with similar benefits. In the original argument, Fisher and Ury (1981) argued that negotiators should have an idea of their best alternative to a negotiated agreement. Only by comparing the offer on the table with the best alternative reached without negotiation would actors know whether it was in their interest to accept a deal on the table. Moreover, such a BATNA, they argued, not only helps you evaluate your options more transparently. It also helps you while you are still pursuing the negotiation itself (rather than the alternative).²³ It moreover impacts several psychological mechanisms and prevents undue optimism, or, more commonly, pessimism about alternatives. Furthermore, if an alternative is not explicitly developed, it often quickly becomes unavailable. This is another reason BATNAs are worth developing while still pursuing a negotiated agreement.

In this dissertation, I argue that policy-makers should think about their preferred alternative to the policy they are pursuing much like negotiators ought to think about BATNAs. I am not arguing that it is possible to ascertain with certainty what the objectively best alternative would be in any given situation. Rather, one of the reasons that the preferred alternative needs to be explicitly defined is precisely because reasonable people would be able to disagree on the plan-B that should be favoured. Yet having thought about, and reaching explicit agreement on, a preferred alternative even before that alternative will actually be needed, has benefits. To the extent that the pursuit of foreign policy goals usually entails an element of negotiation (in the case of Britain and Iraq, negotiations with the United States, Iraq, and the member states of the Security Council), all the ‘usual’ advantages of the BATNA

²² Christopher Meyer, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 26 November 2009,” 2009, 64.

²³ Roger Fisher, William Ury, and Bruce Patton, *Getting To Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In*, 2nd ed. (London: Penguin, 2011), 104-107.

apply. The idea that alternatives that are not explicitly developed might be unavailable by the time they are needed, is even more true for elaborate governments plans than in individuals' negotiations.

Moreover, determining a preferred alternative forces policy-makers to think harder about the conditions they attach to their (first) policy. Few foreign policy goals are worth pursuing at all costs; most foreign policy goals will only be (deemed) worth pursuing if certain conditions are fulfilled. These conditions can be very varied: from progress in another foreign policy matter – I will agree to sign this treaty if you agree to sign another one – to compliance with international law, from domestic support for a particular course of action to a particular assessment of risk (upgrading a weapon system because a neighbour is deemed dangerous). These conditions can be the *ideal* conditions under which a government would like to pursue a policy; they can be essential conditions, without which the pursuit of a certain goal becomes either futile or not worth the price; they can be necessary conditions, without which a certain policy goal is not achievable for logical or practical reasons. Policy-makers must have clarity, at least in their own mind, about what type of condition any conditions they attach to their policy is. Is it optional? Essential? *Truly* essential?

The answer depends at least partly on your alternatives. If your preferred alternative to your foreign policy goal is not a very good option, then this might change your calculus about which conditions are genuinely required and which are merely optional. The same is true if you have a good plan-B to replace the original policy with. The point at which you walk away from a certain option – when your conditions are not met – should, after all, depend on the alternative you have. The most sensible way of determining your course of action is to compare the options that are open to you, rather than evaluate any one option in and by itself without reference to what other options you have. This is also the key idea behind the original BATNA from Ury and Fisher. In our adapted version, it means that governments should consider their preferred alternative to the foreign policy they pursue to determine which conditions to action they consider optional, all things considered, and which are minimal requirements to a certain policy course, with the implication that the policy course will be abandoned (for the preferred alternative) if those minimal requirements fail to manifest themselves.

Getting to Yes, Ury and Fisher's book, focused on negotiations between *individuals*. When the idea of a BATNA is translated to a preferred alternative in foreign policy-making by

governments, there are further benefits.²⁴ A preferred alternative not only helps with external negotiations: it can also help maintain clarity within the government and civil service. Indeed, an explicit preferred alternative and minimal requirements are an efficient way of conveying the rationale and limits of a policy choice. Thus, they can help mitigate some of the principal-agent problems in governmental policy-making. Accidental policy drift is likely lessened. Departments and civil servants are also more likely to understand – and communicate – which of the practical limitations that they face in their planning are likely to be important to political decision-makers (namely those that affect minimal requirements). The concepts of ‘preferred alternatives’ and ‘minimal requirements’ allow for better triage and communication of the most relevant information. They make it easier for everyone – politicians and civil servants, different government departments – to stay on the same page.

When Whitehall prepared for the (potential) invasion of Iraq alongside the United States, there was no unequivocal policy position. Preferred alternatives and minimal requirements were not clearly defined. The Foreign Office – and most of the civil service – assumed that the Security Council route could and would not be abandoned. For them, the preferred alternative to negotiated disarmament in the Security Council was therefore further containment. The Prime Minister, however, assumed that Saddam Hussein must be dealt with. The Security Council was less important. For him, the preferred alternative to disarmament through the Security Council, therefore, was disarmament through military force by a coalition of willing states (in the hope that this would be feasible). Although Tony Blair was completely committed to disarmament, by February 2003, London was hopelessly stuck between these commitments – including all the military preparations – and the fact that the Security Council was fractured, Cabinet nervous and the Attorney General unconvinced until the last moment of the legality of the war. Washington said London could still withdraw, but the Prime Minister did not consider the offer. Instead, he wagered all his political capital on participation in the invasion – and narrowly won. Cabinet reluctantly agreed, and the Attorney General judged war legal after all.

Tony Blair waged this bet despite virtually none of the conditions – the stated ‘minimal requirements’ without which an invasion would not be entertained as an option – set out by London having been fulfilled. A close look at the relevant Whitehall departments reveals that they were not prepared for this. Instead, the Foreign Office, the Ministry of Defence and the Department for International Development had been preparing according to what they

²⁴ The book gives examples of organizations, but describes them as unitary actors. Ibid., 104-105.

believed to be the policy. They believed that the British government's preferred alternative to disarmament via the Security Council was containment via the Security Council. In correspondence with this, they believed that war would only take place under a certain set of conditions: a solid war plan, the support of the United Nations institutions, clear legality and corresponding legitimacy, reconstruction of Iraq that would only take place with an additional (compulsory) Security Council resolution. These assumptions were built into their preparations for the invasion, both the fighting phase and the phase immediately after Saddam Hussein would be deposed.

The British military assumed (amongst other things) that civilians would come in and take over soon after the war-fighting had finished; that other countries would shoulder large parts of the burden, both financially and in terms of military contributions after the regime had been removed; and that United Nations institutions and specialists would play a central role after the invasion. The Department for International Development assumed that its people would only work on reconstruction within a legal framework – that is, with an additional Security Council resolution – and only in a stable security environment. It also assumed that it would contribute by inserting money into the international system, counting on a leading role for the United Nations and the presence and support of other nations. The Foreign Office had similar assumptions.

Crucially, their plans *depended* on those assumptions. If these assumptions proved untrue, the plans would become irrelevant and their execution deeply problematic. The Department for International Development, for example, did not merely want or expect an active role for both the United Nations institutions and the countries of the United Nations: it *needed* the United Nations to execute its plans. Without a leading role for the United Nations, it would not be able to disburse money via its institutions or related NGOs. Without major contributions from other nations, the British military would struggle to find enough money or capacity to fulfil its post-invasion role. Whitehall's assumptions about British policy priorities matter. Its expectation that if disarmament with the clear support of the Security Council (the chosen policy goal and strategy) were to fail, the preferred alternative would be to stay with the Security Council and *not* go to war under those circumstances, was important. These interpretations of the preferred alternative and corresponding minimal requirements were interwoven with the preparations they made to enact what they thought to be the British policy position.

Eventually the British government had to abandon its plan A when it became clear that the Security Council would not agree to disarmament in the timeframe foreseen. The alternative

that it chose was to pursue a war that was legal from a domestic point of view (after the last-minute advice from the Attorney General), but that clearly failed to enjoy the support of the Security Council, the United Nations organization, or the member nations. Many categorically considered the invasion to be illegal; it had no international legitimacy. This was not the alternative Whitehall had expected or prepared for. It did not conform to its expectations of British minimal requirements either. As a result, the circumstances of war did not reflect the circumstances for which the plans were built. Thus, the plans were not only mutually contradictory but unsuited for the invasion that London eventually chose to pursue.

4. SCOPE AND ARGUMENTATIVE BURDEN

Metric and scope

Like other works, this dissertation demonstrates that Britain was ill-prepared for the post-war phase. However, unlike other works, it does not judge ill-preparedness by the situation on the ground (by linking it to the rise of the insurgency): the argument is *not* that Britain was incapable of handling the hand it had been dealt on the ground in Iraq. While that argument is certainly important, the metric used in this dissertation is different: the post-invasion planning is evaluated by *internal* coherence and logic. London was ill-prepared in that the plans were incoherent and not relevant to the war the British chose to participate in. They were not only unsuited for the war that the Iraqis or circumstances forced on the British; they were unsuitable even for that part of the war effort that was under Britain's control.

In other words, this dissertation is not a work on military strategy. It is not about the interaction of warring parties. Rather, it is an examination of the British government and civil service's internal workings. It seeks to explain how those institutions failed to set out and prepare a policy with corresponding coherent, relevant plans. The curiosity of the case lies in the mismatch between the goal and the tools. For that reason, the period covered in detail runs from 9/11 – as the proximate cause for Washington's redirection of its Iraq policy – to the moment the war-fighting phase of the invasion was over. At this point, one can observe that the plans made by London were not suitable for the policy pursued by that capital. This dissertation examines (some of) the causal chains that led up to that point. It does not examine what followed: the relationship between the coalition's post-war preparedness and the insurgency that emerged is a related but altogether different topic.

This thesis does not contradict the generally accepted idea that within the British system, the Prime Minister was the primary actor pushing for war and the most important driver of

policy. However, it argues that ‘Blair’ – his wishes, his actions, the way the war was pushed through Cabinet and Parliament – is not in itself a sufficient explanation for the course of the invasion of Iraq. In particular, it fails to explain why the post-invasion part of the military intervention was under- and misprepared. This thesis examines how various departments prepared for war and how the assumptions that underlie their policy were both mutually contradictory and eventually incorrect for the invasion as it happened. This cannot be explained only by ‘Tony Blair’; it also must be understood as a result of the systems in which policy was made.

With regard to this it is also important that the lessons that this dissertation draws from Iraq are valid regardless of whether Tony Blair misled his government on purpose. That is important because if the dissertation relied on Tony Blair having misled the government, the dissertation would need to spend substantially more time justifying that claim. Moreover, although a strong sense of betrayal has continued to surround the Iraq war – the *Economist* referred to Blair as one of the most hated men in the country – the academic argument is not settled, particularly on the question of whether Cabinet (as opposed to the wider public) was not aware of actual Iraq policy.²⁵ Bluth argued that the assumption of deception is unfair, and many academics (including I) interpret the Iraq war as a matter of self-deception rather than deception.²⁶ On the other hand, any dissertation on the Iraq war relying on innocence would have to deal with the evidence that tells us many members of Cabinet systematically failed to be included in policy-making, and with the observations made in this dissertation that indicate that ministers prepared inappropriate policy, likely because they did not know better.

Type of argument and usefulness

²⁵ “The Persecution of Tony Blair,” *The Economist* (London, April 2014), <http://www.economist.com/news/britain/21601242-hating-war-mongering-former-prime-minister-has-become-dismal-national-sport-persecution>.

²⁶ Christoph Bluth, “The British Road to War: Blair, Bush and the Decision to Invade Iraq,” *International Affairs* 80, no. 5 (2004), 871-892.

Patrick Porter, “Lest We Forget: Britain’s Iraq Inquiry, and Why It Matters,” *International Politics* 53, no. 6 (2016): 683-88.

E. Herring and P. Robinson, “Deception and Britain’s Road to War in Iraq,” *International Journal of Contemporary Iraqi Studies* 8, no. 2-3 (2014): 213-32.

Paul Hoggett, “Iraq: Blair’s Mission Impossible,” *British Journal of Politics & International Relations* 7, no. 3 (2005): 418-28.

Bluth has written a rejoinder to Hoggett’s article, claiming that his article misportrayed the British case for war in important respects. While I agree with Bluth’s assessment of what the government’s case was, I disagree with his evaluation of it; I also believe Blair was self-deceiving rather than deceiving (although the argument in this dissertation does not *rely* on that belief):

Christoph Bluth, “‘Iraq: Blair’s Mission Impossible’: A Rejoinder to Paul Hoggett,” *British Journal of Politics & International Relations* 7, no. 4 (2005): 598-602.

This dissertation contains two main contributions. The first is describing Whitehall's preparation for the invasion in much more detail than has been done, (overwhelmingly) on the basis of the primary materials that have become available through the Iraq Inquiry. It is also the first academic work to examine the preparation of Iraq policy across both political institutions and all key government departments, as opposed to either politics or one department only (like *High Command*).²⁷ As this dissertation shows, the politics and civil service preparation are intimately linked – and many problems were the result of *interdepartmental* failures. This approach thus contributes directly to our knowledge and understanding of what exactly happened. Further works will doubtlessly be able to build on those insights.

The second contribution is an argument about the use of 'preferred alternatives' while formulating and preparing foreign policy: namely, that **the systematic use of 'preferred alternatives' and their corresponding minimal requirements is a useful tool in foreign policy-making, for without them policy-makers risk a range of problems, from suboptimal negotiation strategies to incoherent policy plans.** This argument amounts to a prudential guideline; examining how this guideline (and the failure to follow it) played out in the case of British Iraq policy strengthens our insights on both the Iraq war and in the importance of this prudential rule. Indeed, the Iraq war is a near-ideal type case to illustrate this guideline, both because of the amount of source material available thanks to the Iraq inquiry, and because of the seriousness of the failures involved.

Before discussing whether this argument is credible, however – the task of the entire dissertation – let us consider for a moment whether it is important. First, I will make the general case for its importance. Next, I will address two specific concerns. The first of those is whether the argument is trivially true: correct but yielding so few new insights as to become unimportant. The second specific concern is whether the argument is true and important, but unable to have practical consequences, destined to remain part of an academic wish for perfection only. I argue that the lesson is much less well understood than ought to be the case, and that preferred alternatives and minimal requirements can easily be applied in real foreign policy-making situations. Like any tool, they will not perfect the situation; but they are likely to improve it.

The general argument for the importance of this dissertation is the following: when it comes to policy analysis, there is an important difference between foreseeing a wide range of

²⁷ Elliott, *High Command: British Military Leadership in the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars*.

potential problems and analysing which problems actually occurred and why. It is relatively easy to say that much can go wrong when one decides to follow a controversial foreign policy or when one invades another country; more insight can be gained by examining what *actually* went wrong in a particular instance. This need for the identification of specific problems – and the need to learn from them – is very visible in the literature on war and defence forces. The same type of problem identification and analysis should be done about the wider civil service, which is what this dissertation does for British Iraq policy in the period of 2001-2003. It shows that a variety of problems encountered by the United Kingdom can be understood as the result of one root cause: the lack of well-defined policy position including preferred alternative and minimal requirements.

More specifically, ‘Blair’ functions as a shortcut in explaining the problems of the (British) Iraq war, but that does not equal a good understanding of *how* things went wrong. The exact analytical links matter because prescriptions to avoid repetition of such failure depend on the diagnosis of the problem. Moreover, this thesis is a way of making policy-making a little more fail-proof as a system. Making the *process* more robust is fundamentally different – and more useful – than taking a particular stance on one policy issue. This dissertation is concerned with making policy well. The benefits of an improved understanding of the process by which policy is made, and the resulting improved process by which policy is made, are wider than any particular policy pursued by the government. This is why the argument about preferred alternatives and minimal requirement, if it is proven to be solid (the burden of the rest of the dissertation, not of this section), is so important.

It is important, but is it trivially true? The argument against trivial truth is two-fold. There is a generic argument: the fact that something is well-known and has been recognised as important, does not mean that the lesson does not bear repeating. In the words of Lewis Carroll’s Gryphon: ‘That’s the reason they’re called lessons, (...) because they lessen from day to day.’²⁸ If a well-known weakness in foreign policy-making presented itself (again) in the British case of Iraq, this is worth demonstrating, to better understand both the weakness and the war. However, and more importantly, I do not believe the importance of preferred alternatives and minimal requirements to be trivially true. Policy-makers generally understand the importance of clear policy goals and sound strategy. Those might not always be achieved in real policy situations, but the fact that people know their importance helps

²⁸ Lewis Carroll, *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, 1866, [https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Alice%27s_Adventures_in_Wonderland_\(1866\)/Chapter_9](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Alice%27s_Adventures_in_Wonderland_(1866)/Chapter_9).

them focus their thinking; gives a framework for useful critique; and has led to more research into and better understanding of the challenges that surround them.

The same is *not* true for preferred alternatives and minimal requirements. To be sure, governments implicitly and sometimes explicitly understand that they need to determine the 'minimal requirements' of their policy. This is particularly true in dealing with 'enemies': in this case 'minimal requirements', usually phrased as red lines, are part and parcel of normal policy and policy critique. The cartoons of Obama drawing multiple red lines in the sand regarding Syria's use of chemical weapons are a more recent example.²⁹ However, this is less obviously true when countries are dealing with other 'friendly' countries, even though, as Schelling pointed out, there ought to be no difference.³⁰ Moreover, there is no clear evidence that administrations and civil services understand that explicitly distinguishing between desired conditions and essential conditions (the latter being minimal requirements, the former being desirable but not important enough to change the policy that is best pursued) benefits them internally, by providing structure and guidance to the efforts that underpin broad policy guidelines.

As Fisher & Ury pointed out, even though BATNAs are the only rational way of determining which policy option should be pursued, in practice people tend to stick with arbitrary limits.³¹ In other words, we know people tend to use bottom lines badly – by setting them arbitrarily, rather than linked to a BATNA – and there is little in the policy-making literature to explicitly counter this. In my extensive research of the testimonies put forward in the Iraq Inquiry and the documents released, I have found no indication that politicians, diplomats, or civil servants were aware of the importance of an established preferred alternative (under that name or any other form). This indicates that at least for 2001-2003 Iraq policy, that insight was very likely missing; and it strongly suggests that the full understanding of preferred alternatives is not common in governmental policy-making.

The argument about best or preferred alternatives is thus likely not generally understood. Governments get criticized on their plans. Often, especially in military affairs, they get critiqued for not having a follow-up plan: the governments apparent lack of follow-up plan for a Syrian bombardment, for example. However, that is not a lack of a preferred alternative; it is simply an incomplete plan A. Nor must a preferred alternative simply be understood as

²⁹ Some examples have been gathered on this website: Raymond Thomas Pronk, "Obama's Red Lines - Videos," 2013, <https://raymondpronk.wordpress.com/2013/09/04/obamas-red-lines-videos/>.

³⁰ Thomas C. Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1963), 11.

³¹ Fisher, Ury, and Patton, *Getting To Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In*, 100-101.

‘the next thing we try when the first fails’. A preferred alternative is an assessment that happens *simultaneously* with the primary policy being pursued, as it has the specific goal of determining when one ought to abandon the original policy. It is a continuous benchmark. It is easy to understand that it would be good for governments to have back-up plans *once* the first plan fails; it is harder to grasp the full benefits of developing clear preferred alternatives and using them *to enhance the first policy*. Preferred alternatives are no luxury to be added on when the first plan is finished: they should be part of the first plan, for all the reasons briefly touched upon here and set out in Chapter II.

Defined preferred alternatives and understood minimal requirements are thus, at least theoretically, useful. There are good reasons to believe they will also be of practical use. Introducing them as a part of standard foreign policy discussions would improve those debates and subsequent preparation of the chosen policy. Of course, there are many practical reasons why policy-making is imperfect. Governments and departments – as demonstrated amply in this dissertation – work under numerous pressures. They do not have unlimited resources and perfect information to devise perfect alternatives and corresponding minimal requirements. Yet this does not take away from the fundamental usefulness of introducing the concepts. Preferred alternatives do not receive the attention they deserve in practical policy-making because their function is little studied and poorly understood. A more explicit articulation of their function and usefulness – even to the preferred policy that is being pursued – makes it easier for governments officials and critiques alike to understand why and how they should be a part of the normal determination of a government’s policy position and to understand when they are missing. As a basic concept, they will not make perfect; but they are likely to improve policies and their preparation and implementation.

Argumentative burdens of this thesis

The arguments presented here imply several argumentative burdens. The essential message for policy-makers and analysts alike is that a government’s full policy position ought to include a goal, a strategy, a preferred alternative, and a corresponding articulation of minimal requirements. This relies on a convincing argument that preferred alternatives are likely useful (and, to a minor extent, that this is not already understood widely). There must be a plausible case that without preferred alternatives and corresponding preconditions (*corresponding* preconditions as opposed to *random* preconditions), policy-making is more likely to be more flawed. This argument is constructed as a common-sense prudential guideline, illustrated in this dissertation by the analysis of the Iraq war. It does not rely on

characteristics specific to the Iraq war and can be applied to other foreign-policy episodes too.

Regarding the Iraq episode, there are several argumentative burdens. The first is to show that London indeed failed (explicitly and implicitly) to have a coherent policy position. The second is that London had plans that were unsuitable for the invasion. The third, the causal link, by its very nature is hardest to 'prove'. The reasonable (and commonly accepted) argumentative burden is to show that there are plausible causal links between the lack of policy position and the nature of the plans. The argument of this dissertation is that the lack of preferred alternative and minimal requirements was the root cause of several other problems that together amounted to a bad planning process and bad plans. In the analytical chapter (VI), a short counterfactual is given to highlight how it is likely that *with* a clearly defined preferred alternative, it is likely that the plans and planning process would have shown substantially less weaknesses.

5. DISSERTATION STRUCTURE

How is the dissertation structured and how do individual chapters relate to the overall argumentative burden? This introduction is followed by six chapters. The first two chapters lay the groundwork for Chapters III-V, which are empirical. Chapter VI brings them together and, in the light of the evidence of the previous chapters, re-examines the central thesis. It also shows how this contribution fits in with the existing Iraq literature. The first chapter, a brief literature review, argues that usual explanations for Britain's Iraq policy have focused too much on the Prime Minister. Although this is understandable and to a large extent justifiable, it has obscured that Britain's failure was not simply the result of Tony Blair's existence or decisions: it was a result of the friction between the will to go to war and *other* aspects of foreign policy-making. Indeed, Britain's Iraq policy can best be understood as the result of the *tension* between the Prime Minister's Iraq inclinations and usual Iraq policy, which had for a decade set the context within which the Foreign Office (and the rest of Whitehall) continued to work.

As summarized in the chapter, many existing FPA explanation of the British conflict in Iraq focus on the Prime Minister and how the British political system and cultural context allowed his unusual, strong views on Iraq policy to prevail. These explanations, however, do not explain in themselves why Britain was willing to join the American-led invasion when it was clear that the plans for the conflict (in particular for Phase IV) were severely lacking – nor do they explain why the plans were so flawed. The literature on the American side of the war meanwhile, has focused heavily on both the (still disputed) reasons for going to war and on

the reasons for the American lack of Phase IV planning, including the role neoconservative thinking might have played in this. However, as I demonstrate, these existing explanations cannot explain the particular *British* characteristics of Britain's failure to plan well. This failure merits a separate explanation, which is what this dissertation puts forward.

The second chapter introduces a guideline about foreign policy-making: misassumptions in policy-making can be minimised by establishing preferred alternatives and minimal requirements. The argumentative burden of this chapter (and indeed the dissertation) is to formulate this guideline. It does so by taking an existing concept and adapting it for use by governments. The original guideline is that negotiators must develop a BATNA (best alternative to a negotiated agreement), a concept by Roger Fisher and William Ury. They envisaged it as a tool for individuals. I argue that their idea has further benefits when extended to governments. Preferred alternatives and their corresponding minimal requirements not only keep one on track to choose the optimal policy: as a short-hand tool for understanding the limits, scope and rationale of a given policy, they can help prevent bureaucratic drift, prevent policy inertia, and lessen the harms of information asymmetry between principals and agents.

When 9/11 changed American Iraq policy, the United Kingdom reviewed its own policy in the light of that change. This is where the three empirical chapters begin. They end immediately after the successful overthrow of Baghdad, when the failure of British (post-)war planning becomes apparent. Chapter III discusses the process by which the British government decided to join the American invasion with a full division. It is the story of the London politics of the Iraq war. Chapter IV discusses how the various departments made plans and what those plans entailed. It is a civil service story, covering the Ministry of Defence, the Foreign Office, the Department for International Development, and the Cabinet Office. It uncovers the assumptions that underlie the planning and plans. Chapter V discusses the immediate post-war phase. It thus contrasts the assumptions underlying the plans with the reality encountered by British troops and personnel on the ground.

The argumentative functions of those chapters are closely linked. Chapter III demonstrates that in the decision-making process on Iraq policy, Blair's vision on foreign policy won after a long period of ambiguity. Chapter IV shows that departments nonetheless mostly prepared along traditional lines because they did not envisage the policy that ended up prevailing. Chapter V shows that the assumptions on which the plans were built were incorrect in the event of the actual invasion. As a result, the plans were not suited for the circumstances. The overall argumentative burden of these chapters is two-fold. Together, they describe London's

failure to prepare good plans for the invasion. In this sense, they can be read as an independent important contribution to the Iraq literature.

However, these chapters also show the absence of a preferred alternative and of an understanding as to which 'conditions' to military actions were minimal requirements, and how this reverberated through the civil service. This is their second argumentative burden, which they share with Chapter VI. Chapter III demonstrates that London pursued an ambiguous policy for most of the lead-up to the war. The Foreign Office, much of Cabinet and the press interpreted the policy as following the Security Council first and dealing with Saddam Hussein second. Tony Blair, if forced to choose, was willing to abandon the Security Council. In other words, it was unclear what the preferred alternative would be if the Security Council proved unwilling to act under the timeline given by the Americans. The lack of clarity about priorities equally is a lack of clarity on the (pre)conditions that would determine war.

Chapter III thus shows that London failed to have a clear policy position; all three chapters also show how this mattered. Chapters IV and V show that this lack of clear policy position led to misinterpretations in the departments and subsequent suboptimal planning and plans. Had the departments been clear on the limits and priorities of the chosen policy, their assumptions would very likely have been different: more coherent and more relevant to the actual circumstances of the invasion. Chapter III shows that even as the government received ample warning that the plans for the post-war phase had severe problems, the government invaded. This, too, is exactly what is predicted by the Harvard Negotiation Project about BATNAs: if alternatives are not developed, original plans cannot easily be abandoned even when there is a clear rationale for doing so.

The dual purpose of Chapters III to V – part description based on primary research, part inductive theory-building about making foreign policy – inevitably leads to trade-offs. Because building the argument relies necessarily and primarily on a clear understanding of the facts that underlie it, description has taken priority in those chapters. They are structured to best elucidate the dynamics of the government and civil service and built around the assumptions that underlay policy-making. Therefore, Chapter VI was added, focusing more specifically on the consequences of the lack of an established preferred alternative and clear minimal requirements in Britain's preparation for the Iraq invasion. It retraces Chapters III to V through the lens set up in Chapter II.

First, Chapter VI demonstrates that London had no clear policy position. Next, it traces the dual impact this had: the lack of clear alternative meant that London was both worse prepared and more inclined to nonetheless continue the existing policy. Chapter VI's task is

to demonstrate that London invaded Iraq with (very) suboptimal plans because of lack of a full policy position. That is also the general thesis of the dissertation. This is an original contribution because it shows an important connection between *why* Britain went to war and *how* it went to war. This connection has generally been assumed but remained underanalysed and was therefore in important aspects misunderstood.

6. CONCLUSION

This dissertation has two principal purposes. The first is to describe how Whitehall's failure to plan well for the invasion came about, in particular the phase after Baghdad's fall. The four departments most important to Iraq policy are examined: the Cabinet Office, the Foreign Office, the Ministry of Defence, and the Department for International Development. Those departments had different understandings of the Iraq policy they were meant to implement. They also had different – and incompatible – understandings of the division of responsibility and labour among them. The problem was that those assumptions were mutually contradictory and not applicable to the policy as it was eventually pursued. As a result, the plans based on those assumptions, too, were incoherent and unsuited for the invasion.

The second purpose of this work is to put forward a related thesis about foreign policy-making: in determining their foreign policy, governments should consider the 'preferred alternative' and, with the help of this preferred alternative, establish 'minimal requirements', as well as policy goals and strategy. These are not only important as a back-up plan; they also help improve the pursuit of the original policy. This happens through a better assessment of the strengths (or weaknesses) of the government's position, but also because preferred alternative and the designation of minimal requirements minimise the risk of internal misassumptions and unsuitable policy planning. This prudential rule is introduced both theoretically and by analysing Britain's Iraq policy between 2001 and 2003. Britain's Iraq policy is a good case study for this argument despite not being completely typical of normal foreign policy-making: it highlights the importance of the prudential guideline introduced in this thesis by giving a near-ideal type example of what happens when that prudential rule is not followed.

Chapter I: Understandings of the Iraq War

1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter draws on the secondary literature with two purposes. The first purpose is to give the background and context necessary for the empirical research in Chapters III-V; the second purpose is to highlight the newness and importance of the dissertation. Chapters III-V show that London failed to prepare well for the period after the fall of Baghdad, and that this failure resulted from the government's way of deciding on its foreign policy position (notably its failure to choose an agreed-upon preferred alternative). They highlight a badly understood link between the decision-making process on war and the preparation for war: how Britain decided on the invasion (negatively) influenced how it subsequently was able to prepare for that invasion.

Although these chapters themselves are based on primary sources, they build on existing understandings on the war in Iraq, introduced in this chapter. Thus, after a survey of existing Foreign Policy Analysis on the British invasion of Iraq, this chapter discusses the British case for war; US reasons for going to war; and existing explanations on why the United States seemed unprepared for the chaos of the post-invasion phase. The American failure to be well-prepared for this phase shaped, but did not determine, Britain's unpreparedness. Indeed, I argue that a separate analysis of the *British* failure to be prepared is warranted. Herein lies the contribution of this dissertation.

A central argument underlying the chapter is that existing explanations of British Iraq policy focus too much on the Prime Minister. It is true that the Prime Minister was the primary driver of 2001-2003 Iraq policy: he had strong views, went to extraordinary lengths to push them through, and ended up prevailing when Britain helped disarm Saddam Hussein. However, Britain's Iraq policy can only properly be understood by examining the contrast between Tony Blair's world view and Iraq policy as previously pursued by Britain. As I demonstrate, much of Britain's policy behaviour – from the demands on Saddam Hussein it argued for in the Security Council to the failure to have suitable post-war plans – cannot be convincingly explained or understood by any theory centred around the Prime Minister.

The full importance of this argument will become clear in the later chapters: they will show how this tension between usual Iraq policy and Blair's Iraq ambitions translated into one hybrid policy with two different implicit preferred alternatives. Those two different preferred alternatives mattered: Whitehall had been preparing its policy plans on the basis on one preferred alternative (described in Chapter IV), when suddenly the other preferred

alternative ended up prevailing politically (described in Chapter III), resulting in plans that were unsuitable for the policy as eventually pursued (described in Chapter V). In other words, London's failure to prepare well and suitably for the post-warfighting phase of the invasion can only be explained by understanding the difference between pre-existing Iraq policy and the Blair-driven new Iraq policy. The same is true for much of the political process, as shown in Chapter III. One Prime Minister, no matter how influential, cannot explain this government's decision to go to war and its preparedness for that war.

With some exceptions, the literature survey focuses on FPA approaches to the war in Iraq. The first section of this chapter outlines existing analysis on the British invasion to invade Iraq. Most analysis has focused on the role of the Prime Minister, but others have looked at factors that enabled Blair to push his views through. The (idea of the) special relationship will likewise be discussed. After this brief overview of the most relevant literature, the second section sets out the government's eventual internal case for war as described by Bluth: the government decided to invade Iraq because, of all the options available to guarantee safety from Saddam Hussein, an invasion was the only one that could guarantee success and did not have the bad humanitarian side-effects of sanctions. On the basis of my own research, I agree with Bluth's interpretation of the government's reasoning but disagree with his evaluation of it.

The next section discusses why the United States went to war in Iraq; or rather, it describes the academic discussion, which is far from forming a consensus. It also introduces how the British interpreted the American process at that time. This context is provided to frame the British decision to join the American-led invasion. The fourth section, more specifically targeted to the original contribution of this dissertation, addresses the American preparation for Phase IV, while the fifth section addresses existing explanations for the (American) failure to be prepared for the post-invasion phase. The next section details how these existing explanations, while worthwhile, nonetheless still raise questions about the separate *British* failure to have well-prepared, coherent plans. This British element, I argue, merits separate consideration. There are lessons to be drawn from this failure that are different from the lessons that have been drawn thus far.

In these last two sections, I engage with two major lines of alternative explanation for this failure. The first is the idea that the war was unwinnable for reasons internal to Iraq; the second is that post-war preparation was bad not because of failures in the plans but because of an ideological failure to recognise the *need* for planning. I argue that the latter cannot convincingly explain the British failure to prepare, while the former, though not incompatible

with my analysis, does not allow one to draw much-needed lessons about the British capacity to prepare for war. Indeed, there were internal British failures quite separate from the situation in Iraq and they deserve our attention to avoid them in the future.

2. THE BRITISH INVASION OF IRAQ: EXPLANATIONS IN THE FPA LITERATURE

Most explanations for the (British) 2003 invasion of Iraq fit within the tradition of Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) at various levels of analysis. This is true both for work that explicitly locates itself in this tradition as well as for analysis that implicitly takes approaches advocated by FPA (biographies written by journalists are a prime example of this: FPA would advocate such analysis as psychobiography). FPA has at least three hallmarks that make it an approach of choice for the topic: it is agent-oriented; it is actor-specific; and it is strongest at explaining variation in foreign policy.³² It has a focus on human decision-makers as the only actors *actually* capable of making decisions – unlike, for example, states, which are abstractions rather than entities capable of thoughts or actions. It supposes that these human decision-makers are ‘not interchangeable generic rational utility maximizers and (...) not equivalent to the states that they service’.³³ This means that one needs ‘specific and concrete information about [those] decisionmakers’ to explain the foreign policy they pursue.³⁴ This focus on the fact that these humans are *not* identical and will *not* react in the same way to external constraints makes it much more suitable than (other) IR theories to explain variation and anomalies in international politics.

This type of theory is a natural fit for the British invasion of Iraq, which was widely characterised as ‘Blair’s War’. Even the most cursory understanding of Iraq policy 2001-2003 suggests that the British decision to invade Iraq – a war of choice, against an enemy that did not seem to directly threaten the United Kingdom, against international opposition, without legitimacy and with dubious legality in the Security Council – is a curious event to be explained, and that ‘Tony Blair’ – his *specific*, unusual characteristics – must be part of a satisfactory explanation. Non-actor-specific explanations of the British participation in the war can provide part of the explanation – alliance theory is one example – but even then, those constraints (or compelling factors) clearly interacted with the characteristics of individual decision-makers, most importantly Tony Blair, to have the impact they did. FPA

³² Hudson, Valerie M. *Foreign Policy Analysis: Classic and Contemporary Theory* (Plymouth: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007), p. 6.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

analysis recognises that foreign policy events are multifactorial and is emphatic in stressing that these multiple factors get processed and integrated in and by individual decision-makers. FPA also examines different levels of analysis; I will roughly follow the structure of Valerie Hudson's overview of FPA by starting off with individual decision-makers and going outwards.³⁵

What is it about Tony?

The impact of Tony Blair's personality, tendencies, world view, characteristics and leadership style on the decision to join the American invasion of Iraq has been examined in two broad ways. First discussed here are those works that examine his personality and leadership style, exemplified most clearly by Stephen Benedict Dyson's work.³⁶ These works look not at the content of his beliefs about Iraq, but at his preferred *ways* of acting. Also discussed are biographical approaches. Many of those have been written by journalists and (contemporary) historians rather than by Foreign Policy analysts, but these works provide insight in both ways of acting and, principally, in the *content* of his beliefs.

Dyson uses at-a-distance measures to assess Tony Blair's personality. Building on Margaret Hermann's well-known Leadership Trait Analysis framework, which measures seven personality traits deemed relevant for political decision-making, Dyson compares Tony Blair's personality with two comparison groups, respectively 51 world political leaders and 12 British Prime Ministers.³⁷ For four characteristics, Blair scores within the average range: distrust of others, in-group bias, self-confidence and task orientation. However, his score on conceptual complexity is lower, whereas Blair scores markedly higher (two standard deviations) on the need for power and the belief in his ability to control events. Building on previous research, Dyson argues that one should expect such a prime minister to 'challenge constraints within the international system'; exhibit 'expansionist foreign policy orientations', 'prefer proactive policy solutions and a less deliberative decision process'.³⁸ They would 'make decisions based upon limited information' decisively and in binary ways.³⁹ Moreover, a high need for power would lead leaders to be more insistent on their own view prevailing and on concentrating decision-making within a tight group of advisors. This need

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Stephen Benedict Dyson, "Personality And Foreign Policy: Tony Blair's Iraq Decisions", *Foreign Policy Analysis* 2, no. 3 (2006), pp. 289-306.

Stephen Benedict Dyson, "Alliances, Domestic Politics, and Leader Psychology: Why Did Britain Stay out of Vietnam and Go into Iraq?", *Political Psychology* 28, no. 2 (2007), pp. 647-666.

³⁷ Dyson, "Personality And Foreign Policy: Tony Blair's Iraq Decisions", 289-306.

³⁸ Ibid., 294-295.

³⁹ Ibid., 295.

for power would also tend to magnify the impact of other personality characteristics. Dyson argues that these expectations indeed characterised the Iraq policy process.⁴⁰

In his later work, Dyson builds on this work to characterise Tony Blair as a 'constraint challenger', a trait derived from the combination of his belief in his ability to control events and his high need for power.⁴¹ He argues that constraint challengers and constraint respecters – those with low need for power and belief that they can control events – respond differently to the pressures upon them. While both might feel pressure to support a stronger ally – as predicted by alliance theory – they will respond differently given domestic pressure to oppose such an ally. The literature on domestic politics suggests that leaders will not overrule domestic opinions on foreign policy. Thus, if an ally demands support for an unpopular foreign policy course, the domestic politics angle suggests that this support will not come forward. Dyson argues that constraint challengers, like Tony Blair, are less likely to be constrained by domestic politics (especially if they *themselves* believe in the need to support their ally) and more likely to go against popular opinion. This would account for why Blair supported the United States in 2003 for Iraq when prime minister Wilson failed to do so over Vietnam.

Paul Hoggett approaches the Prime Minister in a very different way.⁴² His purpose is to examine whether Blair's Iraq policy, during which the public (and well as, I would add, politicians and the civil service) was misled, must be understood as cynical deception by someone who knew better or whether it can be understood as a form of *self*-deception. Hoggett argues the latter. He argues that there were three rationales for war used by the Blair government and that each of these makes sense only if one assumes a particular form of self-deception taking place. The security case for war – the risk of weapons of mass destruction used by terrorist organisations – depends on a catastrophist form of thinking. The argument for war to maintain the special relationship presumes a black-and-white view of the possibility to maintain such a relationship. The modernising case for war, to offer Iraqis 'freedom *from* dictatorship' and *of* 'democracy and markets', relied on a teleological view of modernity.⁴³

⁴⁰ Ibid., 303.

⁴¹ Dyson, "Alliances, Domestic Politics, and Leader Psychology: Why Did Britain Stay out of Vietnam and Go into Iraq?", 647-666.

⁴² Paul Hoggett, "Iraq: Blair's Mission Impossible", *British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 7, no. 3 (2005): 418-428.

⁴³ Ibid., 422.

Taken together, these justifications offer a picture of a potential catastrophe that can only be solved in one way in which, however, the good of modernity will win out. The self-deception underlying these notions is then traced back to a combination of religiosity and narcissism. Religiosity gives Blair his liberal openness and his messianistic desire to make the world a better place (to free Iraqis and protect the world from weapons of mass destruction) by doing the right thing (stand by the Americans). However, it also gives him the means and power to distinguish right from wrong and adopt the narcissistic view that he can decide on right and wrong, 'ser[ving] his own pleasure whilst mistaking it for the general good'.⁴⁴ Although Dyson rejects religion as the underlying reason for Blair's foreign policy, there are unmistakably ways in which these arguments reflect each other: the focus on black-and-white thinking; the high need for control; the belief in one's own capacity to impact the world for better underlie both Dyson and Hoggett's interpretation of Blair.

Oliver Daddow, too, focuses on Tony Blair to explain Britain's Iraq policy.⁴⁵ His argument concerns the evolution of Tony Blair from Kosovo to Iraq. In 'Tony's war? Blair, Kosovo and the interventionist impulse in British foreign policy', Daddow revisits the idea that Kosovo and Iraq were both manifestations of a well-established doctrine of the international community that Blair had espoused early and set out most clearly in his 1999 Chicago Speech. Daddow argues that Blair did not come into office with a particular interest in, or coherent view for, foreign policy. Instead, Blair's Kosovo policy was shaped by his desire to 'make his mark' as his domestic policy agenda was being stymied by turf wars with Gordon Brown.⁴⁶ In this reading, Blair's engagement in Kosovo is not so much a manifestation of his foreign policy vision as a way to do *something* somewhere.

However, Daddow argues, Kosovo was a success from which the prime minister took away three lessons. The first was the importance of media management; the second was that Blair should have 'more confidence in his ability to push through his reformist vision'.⁴⁷ In Daddow's words, 'Kosovo seems to have been the point at which Blair began to be his own man', no longer bound by decision polls.⁴⁸ The third lesson from Kosovo was that Blair 'did not need to rely on Whitehall's decision-making machinery for ideas or strategy – if he ever had done'.⁴⁹ However, if these are the lessons that one can attribute to Kosovo, it is clear that

⁴⁴ Ibid., 426.

⁴⁵ Oliver Daddow, "Tony's War? Blair, Kosovo and the Interventionist Impulse in British Foreign Policy", *International Affairs* 85, no. 3 (2009), 547-560.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 550.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 555.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 556.

after 9/11 and in the lead-up to Iraq, these proclivities found a much starker expression than they had during the Kosovo episode. Thus, even if one subscribes to the idea that Kosovo was 'the making of Blair', it might have been a prime minister who had not yet found the venture in which to pour these beliefs as he did in the lead-up to the invasion of Iraq.⁵⁰

Both John Rentoul (whose bibliography of Blair was published before 2003) and John Kampfner in *Blair's Wars* give a central place to Tony Blair's beliefs and religiosity.⁵¹ Similarly, his Manichean world view is frequently commented on, as is his sofa-style of government making. Seldon's account of Tony Blair reinforced the prime minister as a religious man.⁵² He also stresses Blair's informal decision-making style, which he calls a denocracy, after his 'den' in Number 10. While these biographies provide context about the prime minister and his decisions in the lead-up to the Iraq war, on the whole they are not concerned with our purpose here: assessing to what extent the prime minister was responsible for Iraq policy and to what extent other factors (shaping the prime minister) can explain British policy in 2001-2003. It is to these other factors that we now turn.

Who makes UK foreign policy? Who lets foreign policy be made?

As the next level of analysis, we can consider those articles that consider not the views of Tony Blair, but how the system around him enabled (or constrained) the prime minister in impacting policy. In 2004, Paul Williams asked the question 'Who's making UK foreign policy?'⁵³ His answer elaborates on the various aspects of foreign policy, with multiple goals being pursued simultaneously by somewhat varying constellations of policy-makers in such a way that one ought to speak of the foreign *policies* of a government. It highlights the complexity of formulation interpretation, implementing and presenting foreign policies. From this emerges a picture of foreign policy shaped by a variety of factors but resulting from multiple actors and institutions. Williams argue that three 'rather traditional foreign policy ideas' nonetheless underlie New Labour's ambition to draw together a more coherent foreign policy across different aspects: multilateralism, Atlanticism and neoliberalism.⁵⁴ Although usefully highlighting the context within which Iraq policy was pursued, Williams' insights cannot explain which influences prevailed in the case of Iraq policy and why. As

⁵⁰ Ibid., 558.

⁵¹ John Rentoul, *Tony Blair* (London: Warner Books, 1997).
John Kampfner, *Blair's Wars* (London: Free Press, 2004).

⁵² Anthony Seldon, *Blair* (London: Free Press, 2005).

⁵³ Paul Williams, "Who's Making UK Foreign Policy?", *International Affairs* 80, no. 5 (2004): 911-929.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 929.

Kettell notes, under this logic 'the development of Britain's Iraq policy [was] something of an aberration'.⁵⁵ As such, the aberration remains to be explained.

Eoin O'Malley gives a more explicit answer to 'how prime ministers exercise influence over policy'.⁵⁶ His argument is that prime ministers, in this case Iraq, control outcomes by structuring the choices faced by other actors. He gives two instances in the lead-up to the invasion of Iraq where choices were allegedly structured by the prime minister. The first are the dossiers that the government published on the threat posed by Iraq, which he argues influenced the conservative vote in parliament. The second example is the legal advice, which was given to cabinet in a more definite form than warranted and without the complete text of the legal advice attached, as demanded by the Ministerial Code. The theoretical argument is plausible, although the analysis applied to those specific instances is somewhat lacking in both warrants for claims and much-needed pre-emptive rebuttal. Nonetheless, the approach seems to have much potential for understanding how Blair navigated domestic opposition.

Steve Kettell's 2009 piece argues that Tony Blair's preponderance is not an anomaly, as suggested by Williams, but rather an unusual degree of normal features of the British political system, which not only promotes decisive leadership but also fails to provide many checks and balances on any strong leader that would emerge from such a system.⁵⁷ Both of these elements shaped the British Iraq war. By promoting strong decisive hierarchical leadership, Kettell argues, the British political system gave the Labour party the incentive to reform: after severe electoral defeats, 'the party ... strengthened the powers of the leadership, and established new mechanisms of strong, centralized party discipline and control'.⁵⁸ Especially after the second election victory in 2001, a dichotomy-minded Blair phrased leadership in terms of all or nothing, with leaders having the choice of being perceived as either dictatorial or weak. The implication is that Blair falls in the first category.

However, the system not only allowed a strong-willed leader to appear: the lack of checks and balances in the system also subsequently allowed this leader a relatively free hand in foreign policy. In the words of Kettell, 'the structural architecture of the British political system ... facilitates a mode of governance based on the apparent benefits of a commanding

⁵⁵ Steve Kettell, "The Curious Incident Of The Dog That Didn't Bark In The Night-Time: Structure And Agency In Britain's War With Iraq", *Politics & Policy* 37, no. 2 (2009): 417.

⁵⁶ Eoin O'Malley, "Setting Choices, Controlling Outcomes: The Operation Of Prime Ministerial Influence And The UK's Decision To Invade Iraq", *British Journal Of Politics And International Relations* 9, no. 1 (2007): 1-19.

⁵⁷ Kettell, "The Curious Incident Of The Dog That Didn't Bark In The Night-Time: Structure And Agency In Britain's War With Iraq."

⁵⁸ Ibid., 422.

executive, replete with relatively weak checks and balances on the exercise of power, and with relatively few formal and effective mechanisms for enforcing scrutiny and accountability'.⁵⁹ In such a system, a determined prime minister could push through policies even if he wanted to do so in ways that went against normal convention. More recently, James Strong has argued, however, that the Iraq episode of 2002-2003 was the beginning of a chance: he traced the growth of the parliamentary prerogative to decide on war through Iraq, Libya and Syria.⁶⁰ Iraq set the precedent and the prime minister thereby (unwittingly) handed a measure of power to (future) parliament.

Culture and National identity: the Special Relationship

Looking at the wider context of British foreign policy and ideas of national identity, the nature of the so-called 'Special Relationship' between the United Kingdom and the United States has been the object of much analysis (and withering criticism). The underlying idea here is that British Iraq policy was driven partly not by Britain's attitudes vis-a-vis Baghdad, but also by the country's attitude vis-a-vis Washington. The questions here are twofold: how was Tony Blair's view on the Iraq issue shaped by his interpretation of the Special Relationship; and how did Iraq impact on the Special Relationship. Central has been the question of whether Tony Blair was Bush' 'poodle' or his 'bulldog': a submissive lapdog or a staunch junior ally who supported US policy out of genuine conviction or British interest.⁶¹

Alex Danchev puts the Iraq War and the 'Special Relationship' in historical perspective, as the title of his article states.⁶² Closer to literature than a traditional foreign policy article, his is an effort to capture the essence of the 'occult essence' of the 'Relationship' by focusing on the way it has been performed over the years, including by Tony Blair. Jane M. O. Sharp, by contrast, focuses on the practical manifestations of the relationship over the Iraq episode.⁶³ Although she provides a strong criticism of the price Britain pays for this alleged relationship, Sharp does not address the question of whether Blair acted out of genuine conviction (I would argue he did). James K. Wither suggests he did but is equally negative about the impact

⁵⁹ Ibid., 431.

⁶⁰ James Strong, "Why Parliament Now Decides On War: Tracing The Growth Of The Parliamentary Prerogative Through Syria, Libya And Iraq", *British Journal Of Politics And International Relations* 17, no. 4 (2014): 604-622.

⁶¹ James K. Wither, "British Bulldog or Bush's Poodle? Anglo-American Relations and the Iraq War", *Parameters*, winter 2003-2004, p. 67-82.

⁶² Alex Danchev, "Tony Blair's Vietnam: The Iraq War and the 'Special Relationship' in Historical Perspective", *Review Of International Studies* 33, no. 02 (2007): 189-203.

⁶³ Jane M. O. Sharp, "Tony Blair, Iraq and the Special Relationship: Poodle or Partner?", *International Journal* 59, no. 1 (2003): 59-86.

Iraq had on Anglo-American relations.⁶⁴ Patrick Porter, although discussing a part of the Iraq war that is outside the scope of this dissertation, convincingly argues that the Anglo-American relationship might have benefits but that this does not make it 'special' or leave the British with genuine influence on American foreign policy-making.⁶⁵

3. BRITISH CASE FOR WAR

To understand why and how the United Kingdom joined the American-led invasion of Iraq, we should not only examine what factors shaped the decision to go to war. We should be clear on what exactly the line of argument was that the British government adopted. The best place in the literature is Christoph Bluth's 'The British road to war', for the article lays out the government's own case for war.⁶⁶ On the basis of my own research, as shown in the three empirical chapters, I conclude that Bluth's 2004 description of the British government's case is overwhelmingly accurate (albeit completely uncritical). Importantly, it remains one of very few publications to fully lay out and engage with the case as stated by the government. As Bluth himself put in another article two years later, the point 'is not that one should support the case that Blair made, but rather that one should actually understand it and judge it on its merit'.⁶⁷ To attack and judge policy-makers on the basis of a case they never set up is to bring down a strawman. While I could not agree more with this premise, I disagree with Bluth's final assessment of the validity of the government's case.

However, let me start where we agree: Bluth's perceptive description of the government's own case for war. Whence the decision for invasion? 'This decision did not derive from the perception of an imminent threat. (...) The case for war rested on the premise that the containment of Iraq through sanctions was becoming ineffective and was morally unacceptable', the latter both because of the humanitarian costs of the sanctions and because leaving Saddam Hussein in power meant giving free reign to a regime that violated human rights and a massive scale.⁶⁸ The long-term goal of the United Kingdom must be kept in mind here: 'in the short term, to reduce the threat Saddam poses to the region (...) in the longer term, to reintegrate a territorially intact Iraq as a law-abiding member of the international community'.⁶⁹ When sanctions fail, they no longer reach either goal. Saddam Hussein might well circumvent them and continue to reinforce his program and weapons programs. But

⁶⁴ Wither, "British Bulldog or Bush's Poodle? Anglo-American Relations and the Iraq War".

⁶⁵ Patrick Porter, "Last charge of the knights? Iraq, Afghanistan and the special relationship", *International Affairs* 86, no. 2 (2010): 355-375.

⁶⁶ Bluth, "The British Road to War: Blair, Bush and the Decision to Invade Iraq."

⁶⁷ Bluth, "'Iraq: Blair's Mission Impossible': A Rejoinder to Paul Hoggett."

⁶⁸ Bluth, "The British Road to War: Blair, Bush and the Decision to Invade Iraq", 871.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 874.

they not only fail: they also bring with them additional human rights harms. In Bluth's opinion, this mattered because Blair not only 'believed that containment was failing, but he believed containment was *wrong*'.⁷⁰

Then 9/11 happened. It proved the threat from terrorists to Western countries was real. It raised fears of a disorganised international community. Terrorists might get weapons of mass destruction from rogue states. Whether this was happening yet was beside the point. It was possible, and 9/11 showed such a risk could no longer be ignored. *Something* needed to happen to prevent the threat from growing, particularly as there was no way of knowing how advanced Baghdad's programmes were and how terrorists would act. But this brought Blair to the position of being without alternatives to the forced disarmament of Saddam Hussein (assuming he would not voluntarily disarm or step down, although theoretically that was possible right until the invasion). Continued containment was not acceptable for humanitarian reasons. It was also getting more and more difficult politically, for members of the Security Council were divided. Simply *lifting* the sanctions was not an option for security reasons, particularly after the Twin Towers fell.

In addition, those attacks also meant the American administration became bent on taking action against Iraq (or perhaps rather: the factions that wanted to deal with Iraq gained the upper hand). As such, it provided a window of opportunity to deal with Iraq. This had been the *right* thing to do ever since sanctions began to fail and the costs of inaction started to mount. It also became *necessary* after 9/11. This is why the British government's *internal* case for war, as noted correctly by Bluth, in essence did not rely on Iraq representing an imminent threat. It did not have to. It was necessary and right to deal with Saddam Hussein. In addition, if the United States insists on going to Iraq, there is an additional benefit in getting involved: to prevent Washington from going it alone. '[T]he international order that Blair envisaged for the twenty-first century was one that would rest on the foundation of international norms and principles (...) and on a united western world. (...) The threat of international terrorism would be so much harder to tackle if the western world was divided.'⁷¹

Summarizing this case for war, Bluth puts several argumentative burdens on those who wish to oppose Britain's Iraq decision. The most important of those is to provide a better alternative.⁷² Blair and Bluth present the chosen policy as 'the least unattractive of the

⁷⁰ Ibid., 878.

⁷¹ Ibid., 875.

⁷² Ibid., 877.

available options'.⁷³ This claim must be rebutted by providing an alternative route that would plausibly have been better, *not* by simply pointing out the disadvantages of the chosen policy. 'Many critics of the war did not in fact propose any alternative to military action, as if doing nothing were an option.'⁷⁴ Those who propose or implicit endorse further containment, in particular, must 'engage with the argument that containment itself entailed human costs on a scale arguably greater than those that would be incurred in a war', for '[i]f there was a human cost of going to war, there was also a human cost of *not* going to war.'⁷⁵ Moreover, Bluth makes much of the point that 'regime change was the *only* option that could achieve [all] objectives of British policy with regard to Iraq', including its reintegration in the region as a law-abiding nation (deemed impossible with Saddam Hussein in charge, even disarmed).⁷⁶

The problem, for both the British government and Bluth, is that these burdens are quite easily addressed. By this I do not mean to argue that the invasion can clearly be dismissed as the wrong answer; but neither the British government nor Bluth have engaged with the counterarguments that can be – and have been – put forward. First, the argument is largely set up as a dichotomous choice between the disadvantages of the pre-9/11 sanctions regime and the risks of disarmament (on the tacit assumption that simply lifting sanctions was not an option; let us accept for the moment that this is true). Nonetheless, before Iraq policy shifted to an invasion, Britain *had* actually been pursuing a third way between the standing sanctions regime and forceful disarmament: Smart Sanctions. Smart Sanctions – the Goods Review List – were about making sanctions more selective and targeted. The specific aim of these more selective sanctions was to reduce humanitarian suffering while containing Baghdad's security threat. Britain also was on its way to achieving the Smart Sanctions goal: the Security Council passed Smart Sanctions in May 2002 (albeit not to the full extent wished by Britain).

In other words, the dichotomy set up by the British government and accepted by Bluth is false: the choice was not between the humanitarian cost of blanket sanctions and the humanitarian costs of an invasion. To equate all sanctions, the old system and the new system, and to condemn both for humanitarian reasons, is absurd when the precise difference between them was meant to be their humanitarian impact. Bluth tells us that detractors of the war have failed to come up with alternatives, and somewhat dismissively

⁷³ Ibid., 890.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 877.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 879, 885.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 877.

says that the 'Liberal Democrats advocated a continuation of containment'.⁷⁷ But the government itself considered Smart Sanctions as a different policy option to mitigate the problems with the old sanctions regime. Therefore, the burden really is on the government and its defenders to engage with this proposed third option, and explain why it would no longer do.

Beyond the humanitarian issue, two more lines of argumentation were used against sanctions. The first was that '[e]ven if [Smart Sanctions] make sanctions more sustainable, the sanctions regime *could* collapse in the long-term' (my emphasis).⁷⁸ This is an interesting argument for two reasons. First, no foreign policy is fail-safe. Absent more plausible analysis on why a sanctions regime *probably would* – as opposed to merely 'could' – fail, the simple possibility of failure is hardly sufficient justification for dismissing this policy option.⁷⁹ Secondly, if we want to understand why Britain decided to invade Iraq, we cannot just explain why an invasion is better than Smart Sanctions. At one point, the government thought Smart Sanctions were the best way to go. Later, it preferred an invasion. What caused this shift?

The last line of argumentation against Smart Sanctions relies on the idea that Smart Sanctions would not achieve their goal for reasons of implementation:

[It] would be difficult to pursue, because it would require the implementation of all the UN Security Council resolutions relating to disarmament in Iraq, the readmission of inspectors to ensure the elimination of all WMD programmes, and a more effectively policed sanctions regime that would hold third states to account for circumventing the sanctions.⁸⁰

In other words: Smart Sanctions would all be good and well if we managed to make them work, but we are not sure we can make them work. Conclusion?

The [policy] document made it very clear, therefore, that regime change was the *only* option that could achieve the objectives of British policy with regard to Iraq: 'In sum, despite the considerable difficulties, the use of overriding force in a ground campaign is the only option

⁷⁷ Ibid., 877.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 876-877.

⁷⁹ This is somewhat of a simplification. There are at least three ways in which the British government could have dismissed sanctions because they 'could' fail. The first way is by arguing that sanctions are *likely* to fail. The second way is by arguing that they are not likely to fail, but that the results of failure would be catastrophic, for instance because failure could not be gauged and would result in sudden, unpreventable disaster. The third is that failure is neither very likely nor very catastrophic, but that there is an alternative that should be preferred because the alternative is less likely to fail and has no other harms. None of these cases were made.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 876.

that we can be confident will remove Saddam and bring Iraq back into the international community'.⁸¹

The problem here is that Smart Sanctions (and the other options under discussion) are held to a different standard than a full invasion. The other options get dismissed because they might not work, and therefore the invasion is the option that is left. But the question needs to be asked: will invasion work? It is absurd to assume that it will work because it is the only option still on the table. This is a negative fallacy *ad consequentiam*: the idea that if something is necessary, it must therefore be true.⁸² In reality, it might well be that *no* good policy option exists to achieve all of Britain's proclaimed goals, including making Iraq into a democratic, stable, reliable neighbour. Bluth dismisses other policy options as incapable of achieving *all* Britain's goal. Yet neither he nor the British government submit a ground invasion to the same test: how, exactly, does one go from a ground invasion to this utopic end state?

The point here is explicitly *not* to argue, with the benefit of hindsight, that the invasion failed and was always going to fail. But neither is the absence of a plausible war plan – *including* Phase IV – a trivial issue. One cannot expect perfection; but the government can be expected to have at least a plausible idea of how an invasion will help it reach its end goal – particularly if it dismisses less radical and risky options because *they* do not reach this goal completely or reliably enough. The government argued that 'a ground campaign is the only option [that will] remove Saddam and bring Iraq back into the international community'.⁸³ Unless there is at least some plausible analysis and a plan on how a ground campaign will achieve exactly that, the 'only option' is not an option at all.

Note that this argument is *not* based on the ultimate failure of the invasion to transform Iraq: it is not based on hindsight. Bluth hold himself hostage to fortune, by concluding that '[i]f the reconstruction of Iraq and the establishment of a stable democracy succeed, then the decisions of 2003 will be vindicated'.⁸⁴ I disagree. Even *if* the invasion had succeeded, the decision-making process pre-invasion was flawed because the comparison between the various policy options was made on the basis of different metrics for different options. There was no clear thinking on how having the American and British military in Iraqi territory would lead to a long-term solution. If despite this, the British would have ended up getting what they wanted out of the invasion, their decision to go to war on a hunch would have

⁸¹ Ibid., 877.

⁸² It is a typical way of dealing with uncomfortable truths: 'Paul O'Connell cannot be injured! That would ruin Ireland's chances in the Rugby World Cup!'

⁸³ Ibid., 877.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 892.

hardly been proved to be a well-made decision.⁸⁵ This is not to say that an invasion was a *bad* idea: a claim might be defended badly but nonetheless be valid. But Bluth puts a burden on those opposing the war to back their claims in a plausible way. The same must be asked about the case for war.

4. WHY DID THE US GO TO WAR?

The invasion of Iraq was an American initiative. To explain the British decisions on Iraq, then, we would do well to understand the American context in which the UK government was making its policy. The American planning process *as it was experienced by the British* will be discussed throughout the empirical chapters; here we will discuss why the United States went to war. The issue remains contentious, although theories abound: for oil⁸⁶, because of the Israel lobby⁸⁷, as a failed attempt to pursue American hegemony⁸⁸, for Bush's personal reasons (relating to his father).⁸⁹ Official explanations have encompassed a terrorist threat emanating from Iraq, a link with al-Qaeda, the threat of weapons of mass destruction, and the liberation of the Iraqi people.⁹⁰ The scholarly debate has evolved with time. In 2006, Cramer and Thrall did a survey of 222 foreign policy experts, asking for their assessment of why the United States went to war.⁹¹ Their survey was prompted by an impression – confirmed by the survey – that there was a marked discrepancy between public academic debate and views privately held by experts.

⁸⁵ Unless one wants to make the argument that plans or plausible analysis on which to base one's decisions are unnecessary. Such an argument would need to claim one of two things. Either it would need to claim that the future is so complicated that there is no point trying to make any plans; in which case, all planning departments in the world might as well throw in the towel. The other option is a belief in political instinct so strong as to belief that a politician can 'intuitively' judge the idea of a war to radically transform a society mostly unknown to him. This, too, seems a stretch and flies in the face of the set-up of existing government departments.

⁸⁶ Michael T. Klare, "Blood for Oil, in Iraq and Elsewhere," in *Why Did the United States Invade Iraq?*, ed. Jane K Cramer and A. Trevor Thrall (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012), 129–44.

⁸⁷ John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, "The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy," *Middle East Policy* 13, no. 3 (2006): 29–87.

⁸⁸ Michael Lind, "Neoconservatism and American Hegemony," in *Why Did the United States Invade Iraq?*, ed. Jane K. Kramer and A. Trevor Thrall (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012), 114–28.

⁸⁹ Jane K. Cramer and A. Trevor Thrall, *Why Did the United States Invade Iraq?* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012).

⁹⁰ U.S. Department of State, "Winning the War on Terror," 2003, <http://2001-2009.state.gov/documents/organization/24172.pdf>.

For the link between Al-Qaeda and Baghdad, see:

Stephen F. Haynes, "Case Closed," *The Weekly Standard*, November 24, 2003, <http://www.weeklystandard.com/article/4618>.

⁹¹ Cramer and Thrall, *Why Did the United States Invade Iraq?*, 2.

In 2006, most experts – contrary to much of the American public – had dismissed official reasons for the war.⁹² There was broad consensus that weapons of mass destruction, the fight against terrorism, and the liberation of the Iraqi people, the arguments put forward by the administration, were *not* the primary reasons why the United States attacked. Instead, more than half of the experts indicated that reshaping the Middle East and its democratic process was a factor in the invasion, and over a quarter indicated that oil was a reason.⁹³ Another quarter mentioned weapons of mass destruction, and slightly less people argued that ousting Saddam to liberate the Iraqis was part of the picture. Israel's security interests, US hegemony, neoconservative ideology and terrorism were each mentioned by 13% of experts.⁹⁴

That said, different motives were attributed to different key players. Vice President Cheney was most often cited by academics as very influential in the American decision for war (by 93% of those responding to the survey), followed by neoconservatives as a group (83%), Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld (79%) and only then President Bush (74%).⁹⁵ Cheney was thought to be primarily motivated by asserting American dominance and by promoting American corporate oil interests.⁹⁶ A variety of motives were attributed to the neo-conservatives. The most important ones, supported by over half the academics, were asserting US dominance, removing Saddam Hussein's threat to Middle-Eastern stability, finishing the 1991 Gulf War, defending Israel and promoting democracy in the Middle-East.⁹⁷ Rumsfeld, too, was thought to be motivated by asserting Washington's dominance in a New American Century, while Bush was thought to be motivated by American dominance and because he wanted to finish his father's 1991 war.⁹⁸ On the whole, the research indicated that even key players not traditionally associated with neo-conservatism (including Bush, Cheney and Rumsfeld) were thought to respond to neo-conservative ideologies and work within this framework – although there was wide disagreement on what that meant, precisely.⁹⁹

Cramer and Thrall identified three areas in which there remained sharp disagreement: whether weapons of mass destruction (WMD) were a genuine worry of the American administration or a pretext only; whether 9/11 provided a catalyst for the invasion or merely

⁹² Ibid., 4.

⁹³ Ibid., 4.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 4.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 10.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 8.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 8.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 8.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 8.

Lind argued emphatically that Cheney and Rumsfeld *are* neoconservatives: Lind, "Neoconservatism and American Hegemony", 114.

a window of opportunity; and whether the invasion was the result of a 'perfect storm' of colliding rationales or driven by one main motive.¹⁰⁰ There is little doubt that the administration exaggerated the threat of weapons of mass destruction to the American public, and that it suppressed evidence to the contrary. Most experts on the war believe that concerns about the weapons were definitely not the primary cause for going to war, even if one accepts that there was some possible long-term concern about them.¹⁰¹ A minority, including Robert Jervis, sharply disagrees.¹⁰² They argue that group-think, arrogance or an absolute zero-tolerance of risk, even improbable risk, made it possible for the administration to genuinely worry about the threat.¹⁰³ They do not see the manipulation of evidence in the public as mutually exclusive with actual concerns about the WMD threat.

The second issue that is still debated is the role of 9/11.¹⁰⁴ There is wide-spread academic consensus (over 85% of the respondents) that '9/11 was critical' to the decision to invade Iraq in that it provided policy-makers with a window of opportunity to do so.¹⁰⁵ However, the question remains whether 9/11 merely provided the opportunity for an invasion that key policy-makers wanted to happen all along (with some even arguing that the invasion would have happened even without the attacks on the Twin Towers) or whether 9/11 was also critical by changing leaders' views on the threat emanating from Baghdad. Some experts have also argued that it was the war in Afghanistan – itself a reaction to 9/11 – that spurred the subsequent invasion of Iraq, by leading to excessive optimism about the low costs and high success that could be achieved by disposing of Hussein.¹⁰⁶ Others have argued that 9/11 showed the risk of Islamist extremism and that this heightened risk changed Washington's calculus about Saudi-Arabia.¹⁰⁷ One argument in this vein is that the Americans wanted more control over oil that was not dependent on Saudi-Arabia, in case the country would come under stronger Islamist influence. Another is that attacking Iraq would allow America to withdraw its troops from Saudi-Arabia (as they were there to protect that country against Saddam Hussein).

The third question is whether America went to war because of a multitude of factors or for one dominant reason.¹⁰⁸ Some academics consider the invasion the result of a 'perfect storm'

¹⁰⁰ Cramer and Thrall, *Why Did the United States Invade Iraq?*, 13.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹⁰² Robert Jervis, *Why Intelligence Fails* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010).

¹⁰³ Cramer and Thrall, *Why Did the United States Invade Iraq?*, 21.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 17-19.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 17.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 18.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 11.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 19.

of cooperating factors. 'However, despite *most* experts combining these multiple reasons (...) many (...) stressed the invasion was definitely *not* the result of a 'perfect storm'. It was striking how many respondents emphasized one set of factors while simply excluding or even sharply denying other factors' (my emphasis).¹⁰⁹ In other words, while in 2006 almost a third of surveyed expert academics said that oil was an important factor behind the invasion of Iraq, many other academics explicitly felt oil was *not* a factor. Similarly, the idea that a powerful Israel lobby was an important factor in the invasion is more widely supported by this survey than one would have expected (given the lack of scholarship on the issue and the lack of public support for Mearsheimer and Walt when they put forward the argument in 2006).¹¹⁰ Many scholars who did not explicitly mention Israel as a factor nonetheless identified the neoconservatives as a highly influential group in the policy-making process, and Israel as an important general concern for neoconservatives. That said, the idea of Israel as a *casus belli* of the Iraq war was far from universally supported and often explicitly disavowed.¹¹¹

In any case, academic debate has since started to drift away from a focus on the neoconservative angle. This is not because the neoconservative angle has been discredited; 'it is more that assessments of the importance of the top leaders of Cheney, Rumsfeld and Bush has increased, especially as it has become clear that the top leaders likely very much wanted to invade Iraq *prior* to 9/11 and were thus not likely persuaded by neoconservatives *after* 9/11 to invade. Instead, it appears the top leaders did not have a way to build support for this project before 9/11, and 9/11 created an opportunity'.¹¹² In other words, the invasion only happened after 9/11 because that date provided a possibility to go to war, but the neoconservatives did not fundamentally change the minds of other policy-makers (or did so earlier).

Cramer and Duggan make this argument. They argue that Cheney's public statements throughout the 1990s, in which he professed happiness that the First Gulf War stopped at the Iraqi border, were a form a loyalty to his former boss, Bush senior (and that this loyalty paid off when Cheney became vice-president to Bush junior).¹¹³ They point to a number of instances, private and public, in which Cheney did seem to support the overthrow of Hussein

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 19.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 3.

Mearsheimer and Walt, "The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy."

¹¹¹ Cramer and Thrall, *Why Did the United States Invade Iraq?*, 20-21.

¹¹² Ibid., 13.

¹¹³ Jane K. Cramer and Edward C. Duggan, "In Pursuit of Primacy: Why the United States Invaded Iraq," in *Why Did the United States Invade Iraq?* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012), 201-43, 213-214.

long before 9/11. Similarly, but much more well-known, Secretary Rumsfeld supported regime change in Iraq before taking office: he co-signed the 1998 letter to then-President Clinton in which the Project for the New American Century called for Hussein to be ousted.¹¹⁴ Together Cheney and Rumsfeld appointed Paul Wolfowitz as Undersecretary of Defence; Cheney also made Scooter Libby both Special Assistant to the President and Chief of Staff to Cheney.¹¹⁵ Wolfowitz and Libby were two of the best-known neo-conservatives advocating the removal of Saddam Hussein. Cramer and Duggan admit that Bush's support for regime change pre-9/11 is more ambiguous. Nonetheless, they give various instances in which the 43rd President suggested that he would 'finish the job' his father started, if given the opportunity.¹¹⁶

In summary, then, clearly the United States' rationale will be the subject of considerable debate for the foreseeable future. However, some general impressions that the British had of American policy are worth pointing out at this point (they will be demonstrated in the empirical chapters). To a large extent, the exact reasons for the Americans' wish to invade were unclear to those involved in policy-making in London. However, it was clear that from London's perspective, 9/11 was the trigger for Washington. Nonetheless, it took several months for Whitehall to fully catch up on how seriously, and in what degree of detail, the Americans were pursuing the Iraq route. There were several reasons for this. There was no direct link between Saddam Hussein and Osama Bin Laden, leading the British initially to believe that Baghdad was not a priority. Blair, better aware of American plans than most of his civil servants, urged the Americans to concentrate on terrorism and Afghanistan first. The British military in particular had its hands full with the quick invasion of Afghanistan. Moreover, initially the British were purposefully kept out of the American planning loop.¹¹⁷

The other point worth making about London's impressions of Washington internal politics is that they did not – as detailed in the three empirical chapters – see the American invasion as pre-ordained and inevitable. Rather, the British saw it as an internal struggle in the Bush administration, with the Pentagon on one side (pro-war) and Colin Powell's State

¹¹⁴ Project for the New American Century, "Open Letter to the President," February 19, 1998, <http://www.iraqwatch.org/perspectives/rumsfeld-openletter.htm>.

¹¹⁵ Cramer and Duggan, "In Pursuit of Primacy: Why the United States Invaded Iraq", 215.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 218.

Faiz Shakir, "Bush Insists 'I Didn't Want War', Overwhelming Evidence Suggests Otherwise," *Thinkprogress*, March 21, 2006, <https://thinkprogress.org/bush-insists-i-didnt-want-war-overwhelming-evidence-suggests-otherwise-ec67e5c9a001#.jgopn9uql>.

¹¹⁷ Tebbit and Boyce, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 3 December 2009", 16-17.

David Wilson, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 4 December 2009," 2009, 8-9.

Tom McKane, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 19 January 2011," 2011, 50.

Bowen, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 7 December 2009", 6-7.

Department (against unilateral action) on the other side. British civil servants' testimonies to the Iraq Inquiry give the distinct impression that the British policy-makers felt President Bush was somewhere in the middle, wavering between various domestic factions. In other words, the British seem to have interpreted events in the American capital city more as a pattern of neo-conservatives pushing for war (as much of the academic community had it in 2006) than as driven by President Bush (an idea examined in more recent works). I mention this not to convincingly solve the question of why the United States went to war – the question is well outside the scope of this thesis – but to frame British understandings of the partner they were negotiating with.

5. AMERICAN PLANNING FOR THE POST-INVASION PHASE

Perhaps even more relevant to this dissertation is the question of American preparation for the post-invasion phase. That something went wrong cannot be denied even by proponents of the war. Manifestly the US administration and its partners did not achieve what they set out to do. Here, the literature gives three dominant lines of argument: a lack of personnel; that American decision-making was dominated by an ideology that failed to recognise the need for post-war planning; and that the war was unwinnable for reasons internal to Iraq. Before evaluating these arguments, let us briefly sketch the American preparations.

Iraq policy under review before 9/11

Despite the sharp disagreement in the academic literature on key aspects on the American reason for going to war, we can trace (some of) the preparation for war in the Bush administration. Regardless of whether 9/11 provided the rationale or the window of opportunity for invading Iraq, and regardless of the precise role neoconservative factions within the government played in promoting the invasion within the administration, it is clear that well before 9/11, the incoming Bush administration was reviewing its Iraq policy of sanctions. Between 31 May and 26 July 2001, Stephen Hadley (Rice's deputy) convened the deputies four times to work on Iraq policy and on 5 February 2001, National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice had chaired the Principals Committee meeting addressing Iraq policy.¹¹⁸ On 1 March it had been decided that Secretary of State Colin Powell should focus on a plan to 'refocus the U.N. economic sanctions on weapons control'.¹¹⁹ This is in the same period in which Britain was also reviewing its sanctions policy and devising plans for smarter (more targeted) sanctions.

¹¹⁸ Bob Woodward, *Plan Of Attack* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2014), 13, 21.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 15.

However, regime change had also been the official stated goal of American Iraq policy since the Iraq Liberation Act of 1998. This Act, as spelled out in an accompanying press release from the Office of the Press Secretary of 31 October 1998, makes clear that ‘the United States should support those elements of the Iraqi opposition that advocate a very different future for Iraq than the bitter reality that the current regime in Baghdad now offers’, with the United States ‘providing support to opposition groups from all sectors of the Iraqi community that could lead to a popularly supported government’.¹²⁰

Many of the people who had advocated for a policy a more severe course of action against Iraq in an open letter to president Clinton in January 1998 were now a part of the Bush government, including Donald Rumsfeld, Paul Wolfowitz, Richard Perle and (perhaps more surprisingly in later light) Richard L. Armitage.¹²¹ As said, together vice-president Cheney and Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld had appointed Paul Wolfowitz as Undersecretary of Defence; Cheney also made Scooter Libby both Special Assistant to the President and Chief of Staff to Cheney.¹²² Wolfowitz and Libby were two of the best-known neo-conservatives advocating the removal of Saddam Hussein.

Now, in government, they once more started advocating for a stronger course against Iraq, focusing on the opposition groups as an ally to dethrone Saddam Hussein.¹²³ As early as late spring 2001, Condoleezza Rice produced a proposal to free the Iraqi people which includes a proposal for training the opposition, although the idea failed to gain traction.¹²⁴ On 1 August, the deputies handed the principals a paper called ‘A Liberation Strategy’, which proposed a strategy of pressuring Hussein that ‘relied heavily on the Iraqi opposition’.¹²⁵ A further paper on options short of war of 8 November 2001, prepared by Douglas Feith, Under Secretary of Defence for Policy, for Rumsfeld, included using the Iraq Liberation Act to aid the Iraqi National Congress in serving as an umbrella organisation for Iraqi democratic opposition group.¹²⁶ At its head was Ahmed Chalabi, a deeply divisive figure generally supported by the neoconservative factions but met with deep scepticism by the CIA and the State Department.¹²⁷ Even Douglas Feith admits in his book that Chalabi saw himself as ‘the leader’

¹²⁰ Office of the Press Secretary, White House, *Statement On Signing The Iraq Liberation Act Of 1998*, 1998, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=55205>.

¹²¹ Project for the New American Century, *Open Letter To The President On Iraq Policy*, 1998, <http://zfacts.com/metaPage/lib/98-Rumsfeld-Iraq.pdf>.

¹²² Cramer and Duggan, “In Pursuit of Primacy: Why the United States Invaded Iraq”, 215.

¹²³ Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, 19.

¹²⁴ Douglas J Feith, *War and Decision* (HarperCollins e-books, 2014), 206.

¹²⁵ Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, 21.

¹²⁶ Feith, *War and Decision*, 219.

¹²⁷ Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, 19-20.

of the political process.¹²⁸ A paper by the British Overseas and Defence Secretariat described him in March 2002 as 'a convicted fraudster popular on Capitol Hill'.¹²⁹

War plans under review

Meanwhile, since early August 2001, Rumsfeld was going through various war plans in the Pentagon.¹³⁰ He found most of them to be outdated and relying on too much personnel to get the plan to work. He felt that part of the reason was that at the lower levels, planners would not be able to accurately decide the level of risk that the plans should be willing to accept: the result would be to make sure all parts of the plan were robust enough, with enough manpower, rather than reflect what Rumsfeld would consider a more suitable risk/force level.¹³¹ He demanded the plans be rewritten more quickly than via usual procedures, asking 'to come back to me every six or eight weeks'.¹³²

In November 2001, Rumsfeld asked CENTCOM Commander Franks for the beginning of a new war plan – a so-called commander's estimate – within one week.¹³³ They met again six days later; four days later; Rumsfeld gave a top secret planning order, do be done in three days instead of the usual thirty.¹³⁴ Further iterations and presentations took place on 4 December, 12 December, 19 December, 28 December, and 1 February.¹³⁵ By now the old Op Plan 1003 had morphed into the Generated Start Plan.¹³⁶ Over the following months, this would be further adapted until option Running Start was presented on 3 June 2002 and the Hybrid option was presented to 5 August 2002.¹³⁷ During this last National Security Council meeting, it was clear that Franks expected to have 265.000 troops immediately after combat, to be drawn down to 50.000 over the course of 18 months.¹³⁸ Afterwards, Powell warned the president extensively about the potential problems with the aftermath.¹³⁹

After 9/11

Feith, *War and Decision*, 189, 197, 239-254.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 190.

¹²⁹ Michael Smith, "Ministers Were Told Premier Was Seen As Stooge", *The Telegraph*, 2004, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/northamerica/usa/1472540/Ministers-were-told-premier-was-seen-as-stooge.html>.

¹³⁰ Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, 32.

¹³¹ Ibid., 35-36.

¹³² Ibid., 34.

¹³³ Ibid., 5.

¹³⁴ Ibid., 38.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 40, 42-43, 54, 80-83, 96-98.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 98.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 134-135, 145-149.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 147-148.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 149-152.

Two days after 9/11, Iraq was mentioned as a possible country against which action should be taken during the Deputies Committee meeting that met in preparation for the upcoming Camp David meeting.¹⁴⁰ In advance of that meeting, Rumsfeld sent a strategy memo to the President and other National Security Council members.¹⁴¹ In it, he proposed that Iraq should be an immediate priority. Nonetheless, on 15 September at a Camp David meeting, none of the president's top advisers – Cheney, Powell, White House Chief of Staff Card, Tenet, and Rumsfeld – voted in favour of Iraq as an initial target of war.¹⁴² Rumsfeld abstained. However, the impetus for addressing Iraq was there. On 29 January 2002, Iraq featured in the State of the Union speech as a country that was an axis of evil (the axis of evil, that is, between terrorism and weapons of mass destruction; not an axis between the three countries mentioned).¹⁴³ Two and a half weeks later, on 16 February 2003, the president signed a new top secret Intelligence Order granting new authorities to conduct operations in Iraq.¹⁴⁴

In early 2002, Rice's deputy Stephen Hadley began organising Deputies Lunches: close hold (meaning even the existence of the meetings had to be kept quiet) twice-weekly meetings to discuss Iraq policy to discuss Iraq policy more freely.¹⁴⁵ Feith writes that the necessity of disarmament was generally accepted within this forum, and regime change was supposed to be necessary to achieve this. In addition to this group, in July 2002, Director of Strategic Plans and Policy of the Joint Staff George Casey set up the Iraq Political-Military Cell.¹⁴⁶ This was an interagency group to coordinate planning between Washington and CENTCOM. An Executive Steering Group soon followed.

Nonetheless, actual post-war planning never seemed to materialize. Feith, in *War and Decision*, writes that the 'common accusation that the Administration neglected to conduct postwar planning for Iraq is wrong', as was the idea that 'the Pentagon's civilian leaders believed no such planning was required'.¹⁴⁷ However, even from his own book it is clear that no such planning materialized. By his telling of the story, CENTCOM's Tommy Franks was responsible for post-war planning. Yet even by Feith's own account, '[s]everal months [after October 2002], however, we were still trying to concentrate CENTCOM's attention on these issues.'¹⁴⁸ He describes at some length the efforts done by the Joint Staff to prod post-war

¹⁴⁰ Feith, *War and Decision*, 48.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 49-52.

¹⁴² Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, 25.

¹⁴³ George W. Bush, "State Of The Union Address", (Speech, United States Capitol, 2002).

¹⁴⁴ Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, 54-55.

¹⁴⁵ Feith, *War and Decision*, 237-238.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 276.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 275.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 292.

planning along – but the plans were not materialising. Eventually in January 2003, Rumsfeld directed Vice Admiral Edmund Giambastiani to create a Joint Task Force ‘to support CENTCOM’s postwar planning efforts’.¹⁴⁹

Interestingly enough, Franks seems to have been under the impression that Douglas Feith’s office was responsible for this part of the planning. In fall 2002, it had been decided that Defense would be put in charge of the entirety of the preparation for the conflict, explicitly including the responsibility to run postwar Iraq.¹⁵⁰ The idea was to have unity of command for the entire conflict, which made Defense a more natural candidate than the State Department. Bob Woodward writes that there was a meeting between Rumsfeld, General Franks, Air Force Major General Renuart and Feith, in which Rumsfeld announces that Defence would be in charge.¹⁵¹ Franks and Feith had a famously bad relationship.¹⁵²

According to Woodward, ‘Feith agreed and said he wanted his policy operation to lead the postwar effort ... Feith would handle the job for Defense, Rumsfeld said.’¹⁵³ When Franks and Renuart left the meeting, they concluded that this meant that Feith’s office ‘has responsibility for planning post-conflict and our responsibility is security. And we don’t own the reconstruction stuff’, concluding they might have ‘dodged a big bullet’.¹⁵⁴ To augment capacity, the Office of Special Plans (meant to be for Iraq policy) was established in Feith’s organization.¹⁵⁵ It is clear that Feith wrote – as he was wont to do – conceptual notes. However, he or his office did not write – and never intended to write – operational plans, later dismissing as ‘ludicrous’ the idea that they could have done so.¹⁵⁶

In other words, although there might have been a theoretical understanding that planning was needed for Phase IV, such planning did not materialise. Moreover, the (conceptual) planning that *had* been done had a number of assumptions that were rapidly undone by Bremer after the war – such as using parts of the Iraqi army as a reconstruction force.¹⁵⁷ It would seem that the need for extensive planning was felt less keenly because the neoconservatives wanted to hand over power to the exiles and other Iraqis as soon as

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 293.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 316.

¹⁵¹ Bob Woodward, *State of Denial* (New York: Simon & Schuster e-books, 2014).

¹⁵² Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, 281.

¹⁵³ Woodward, *State of Denial*, no page (Kindle book).

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Feith, *War and Decision*, 294.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 318.

¹⁵⁷ Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, 206.

possible as 'the only partners available'.¹⁵⁸ These Iraqis seem to have promised a vision of a liberated Iraq that proved wildly optimistic, including in a meeting with President Bush and Cheney in a private meeting on 10 January 2003.¹⁵⁹

Ultimately, though, for this dissertation's analysis, the primary reasons for the American lack of preparation are less relevant than the fact that the Americans were not prepared for an occupation and that – as later chapters will show – the British were aware of this. Although they were a junior partner, they subscribed to participation in the conflict, despite realising the plans were likely insufficient and despite having established earlier that a solid plan – for all stages of the conflict – was a necessary condition for Britain to participate in military action. Therein lies the interest of this dissertation.

Existing interpretations of this failure to be prepared

How to interpret this American failure to be prepared? The first interpretation of this failure to prepare well in the literature is that "the founding sin of the occupation was its chronic lack of personnel and coercive capacity".¹⁶⁰ In this reading, blame for the failure to establish safety and security in the territory of Iraq after the fall of Baghdad lies with those in the American administration who drove down troop numbers to skeletal levels.

The second type of explanation, as argued by Dodge, focuses on the rivalries within the US administration, which saw neoconservatives in a fight with the Realists in the State department.¹⁶¹ The neoconservative reading of the failure in Iraq would then be as follows: there was a workable plan to topple Saddam Hussein, replace him with a body of suitable Iraqis friendly to American interests (such as Ahmed Chalabi) and withdraw quickly the minimal amounts of troops that had invaded. The Iraqis themselves would then be able to improve the situation, including the liberalisation of the economy and the establishment of democracy. However, this plan was scuppered by Realists like Colin Powell, whose negative

¹⁵⁸ Donald Rumsfeld, "Beyond Nation Building", (Speech, Intrepid Sea-Air-Space Museum, New York, 2003).

Feith, *War and Decision*, 252.

Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, *Iraqi Interim Authority Action Plan*, 2003.

Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, *Iraqi Interim Authority (IIA) Implementation Plan*, 2003.

Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, *Iraqi Interim Authority Structure And Implementation*, 2003.

¹⁵⁹ Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, 259.

¹⁶⁰ Toby Dodge, "Coming face to face with bloody reality: Liberal common sense and the ideological failure of the Bush Doctrine in Iraq", *International Politics* 46, no. 2-3 (2009): 255.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 256.

outlook, needless turf wars and slanderous treatment of Chalabi caused avoidable problems. The neoconservative plan did not fail; it was never implemented.

The Realist version would be this: once the neoconservatives got hold of post-war planning, they ignored Realist assessments of potential problems as well as the preparation done until then by the State department. They had no grasp of the difficulties inherent in an invasion and the remodelling of a society and, frankly, did not seem to care. Instead, they wanted to put in charge a deeply unsuited Iraqi with no recent knowledge of, or deep ties to, the country he was supposed to run. In addition, there was no vision on how this would lead to a democracy that was both genuine and pro-American. When this non-plan was put the test, it imploded just as one could have expected.

Both these readings acknowledge that neoconservative thinking held that relatively little American involvement would be needed once Saddam Hussein had been toppled. Building on this, Dodge, in a series of publications, examines whence this ideological view that little preparation was needed.¹⁶² His argument is that while neo-conservatism has ideological tools and concepts to argue for American exceptionalism; for democracy; and for an aggressive, unilateral foreign policy to unite American, it has little to say about how any invasion should proceed. In other words, neo-conservative thinking can explain why America went to war; what it has little to say about are the preparation or plans for such a war.

According to Dodge, this conceptual vacuum was filled by neo-liberal concepts, more specifically the neoliberal ideas of the individual, the market, the state, and democracy.¹⁶³ At the heart of neoliberalism is the rational individual that, once liberated, will use its liberty and rationality to create wealth through and derive benefits from the free market. The state has an ambiguous role. Foremost, it is an institution whose power, easily to great, must be feared and constrained.¹⁶⁴ Democracy, the fourth concept, is meant to keep state power in check. On the other hand, the state has a role to play in achieving liberal values: as the guarantor of security, of market functions, of property rights; but also, in the reading of kinetic neoliberalism, by bringing democracy and free markets to unfree people.

¹⁶² Ibid., 253-275.

Toby Dodge, "The Causes Of US Failure In Iraq", *Survival* 49, no. 1 (2007): 85-106.

Toby Dodge, "The Ideological Roots Of Failure: The Application Of Kinetic Neo-Liberalism To Iraq", *International Affairs* 86, no. 6 (2010): 1269-1286.

¹⁶³ Dodge, "Coming face to face with bloody reality: Liberal common sense and the ideological failure of the Bush Doctrine in Iraq", 261.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 263.

Dodge goes on to argue that liberalism's trust in individuals and mistrust of the state impacted preparations for war in Iraq by framing the Iraqi problem as one of a too-dominant state oppressing rational people yearning to be free. The solution for post-Saddam Iraq, therefore, did not rely on extensive state building. It relied on getting Saddam Hussein out, followed by getting out of the way. In this view, the underpreparedness of the American administration went further than technocratic discussions about the force levels needed. Rather, there was no understanding of the need for state building. After the invasion, it became clear that the Iraqi state institutions had been nigh completely hollowed out by three decades of sanctions designed to break the state.¹⁶⁵ It had been replaced, to a large extent, by an informal, personal shadow network of influence centred around the dictator. Dodge argues convincingly that for Iraq to become a democracy, it was the shadow system that needed to be dismantled. The state needed building up. For ideological reasons, the US had not anticipated this need and was accordingly unprepared.

The third type of explanation is the type of explanation put forward by Jonathan Steele in *Defeat: Losing Iraq and the Future of the Middle East*.¹⁶⁶ This explanation is that the war in Iraq was lost because it was unwinnable for reasons internal to Iraq. According to this rationale, no Anglo-American occupation of Iraq was ever going to work out well, for Iraqis would necessarily rapidly grow weary of those invaders (who have a bad reputation in the region based on history). At various point in his work, Steele seems to suggest that quick withdrawal could have led to better results – a result, no doubt, of his relentless journalistic account of signs that the Americans and their partners were overstaying their welcome. At times, this line of argumentation – although never fully developed – runs close to the neoconservative argument. If he considers a successful prolonged occupation clearly impossible, it is less clear what Steele would have thought of an invasion followed by immediate withdrawal. On the one hand, his focus on prolonged American-British presence as the source of all failure seems to suggest it would have been the better option.

On the other hand, at various other moments in the book, his descriptions of the difficulties in Iraq suggest that while different groups in Iraq might have all wanted the Americans to leave, they also had different and incompatible views on the future of the state. It is not so clear, then, whether Iraqis would have been able to achieve any success in constructing a stable, prosperous nation on their own. In this book as well as many other descriptions of the

¹⁶⁵ Toby Dodge, "US Intervention and Possible Iraqi Futures", *Survival* 45, no. 3 (2003): 103-122.

¹⁶⁶ Jonathan Steele, *Defeat: Losing Iraq and the Future of the Middle East* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2009).

situation on the ground, we find much to believe that Dodge's analysis is right: the Iraqi state was weak vis-à-vis the old shadow structures of Saddam Hussein and needed to be built up.

6. THE BRITISH FAILURE TO BE PREPARED: THE CONTRIBUTION OF THIS DISSERTATION

How do these three types of arguments – low levels of troops and other 'practical' failures in preparation; ideological reasons for un(der)preparedness; and the idea that occupation of Iraq will always fail for reasons intrinsic to Iraq – relate to this dissertation's explanation for the British mispreparation for the post-invasion phase? Or, put differently: what is the value of this thesis' contribution, given the explanations that already exist? Let us begin with Jonathan Steele's argument, that Iraq could never be successfully occupied by the Americans and the British. This argument merits attention not only because it emerges as a possible competing explanation, but all the more so because Steele explicitly phrases it as an alternative to a theory of bad preparation (which is what I provide).

The very beginning of his introduction sets out the stakes:

The bad decisions ... made after the fall of Saddam Hussein have been extensively reported by US officials who worked in Iraq and became disillusioned. On returning home, they wrote illuminating accounts of incompetence, stupidity, arrogance, and corruption. Their common argument is that Bush and Blair failed to plan for the post-war, then compounded this blunder with a series of mistakes. ... The assumption ... is that with better pre-war preparation and post-war management, the USA could have won the peace as impressively as it had won the opening phase of the war.¹⁶⁷

Steele goes on to explain that his thesis is more fundamental, as no invasion of Iraq could have succeeded.¹⁶⁸

This dissertation, like the accounts that Steele refers to, considers pre-war preparation (although not post-war management). My argument is that the pre-war preparation was flawed and that its failures need to be understood more specifically and properly to avoid similar mistakes in future. Indeed, as set out in the next chapter, the argument is that the consistent use of a preferred alternative can help prevent (some of) these harms. However, there is *no* underlying assumption in this dissertation that a better preparation would have

¹⁶⁷ Steele, *Defeat*, 5.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 6-10.

guaranteed success. The idea that there can be only one cause of failure is patently false. I thus reject Steele's dichotomy: there can be multiple causes of failure.

This is important for several reasons. First, to say that the successful invasion of Iraq was an impossible task, as suggested by Steele, does not mean one can leave behind questions of preparation. Rather, this raises a crucial question: why was this alleged impossibility not picked up *before* going to war? Either the invasion was unwinnable from the outset and something in the policy process went wrong, leading to the failure to recognise this; or the invasion was lost at a later stage and preparation becomes a relevant topic of analysis. (A third possibility, that the invasion failed for reasons internal to Iraq that *could not have been discovered beforehand*, is clearly not the argument Steele puts forward and is moot.)

The other problem with Steele's approach is the following: his insistence on a monocausal explanation that discards policy preparation as a cause of failure, does not allow for any lessons to be drawn from those other failures. It is very well possible that the United States and Britain prepared badly *and* that there were unanticipated difficulties because of the nature of an invasion of Iraq (arguably a preparation failure in and of itself). However, focusing only on the latter and presuming that this makes the former irrelevant, means forgoing all possibility for inquiry and learning from those mistakes. Yet as this dissertation shows, Britain had difficulties preparing for Iraq not only in the sense that the policy did not match the ambitions (an argument that might please Steele) but *also* in the sense that the plans it conceived in theory were not adequately prepared, let alone implemented in practice. This internal incoherence is a failure in and of itself, one with potential wider ramifications than just the invasion of Iraq.

In that sense, this dissertation is much more sympathetic to Dodge. Indeed, I believe much of value can be found in his analysis to understand the American failure to prepare. However, to explain the American failure to prepare is not to explain the British failure to prepare. The British decision to go to war happened – this hardly needs repetition – because the United States went to war. Had the US not gone to war, the UK would not have faced this choice between joining the United States or stepping aside. In that sense, British Iraq policy was shaped and constrained by American decisions – just as it was shaped and constrained by the behaviour of Iraq, France, and other countries. Nonetheless, the British decision for war was an autonomous decision by an independent nation, neither automatic nor following the same rationale as that of the United States. No (academic) observer explains the *British* invasion of Iraq in terms of neo-conservatism, oil, the Israel lobby, or half a dozen other reasons that are

thought to have shaped the US decision. A *prima facie* case therefore exists that the British failure to prepare well similarly has a dynamic of its own.

That is not to say, of course, that we need to presume that the UK intended to have, or would have been expected to have, an independent post-invasion plan. In the words of Dominick Chilcott from the Foreign Office: "The first thing to say about the plan is that there was only ever going to be one plan. That would be the coalition plan, which would largely be an American plan."¹⁶⁹ However, two elements still applied. The first is that the UK did intend to prepare (and indeed did prepare) its own plans within the framework of the American plan. To say that there would be no independent British plan is not to say that there would be no British planning or plans. It is clear, both from the contemporary records and from later writing and testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, that civil servants across Whitehall departments felt planning was needed. Planning was *being done*. Yet at the end of the day, it was not suitable for the circumstances under which Britain ended up joining the invasion. This specific British aspect merits attention for it reveals flaws in British decision-making and policy preparation.

Secondly, British policy from the outset was that Britain would only join an American-led invasion if several conditions were fulfilled. A clear plan to achieve the goals was one of those conditions. This means that one of two things must be explained: either one must show that the British *also* took the combination of neoconservative and neoliberal views that made post-war preparation superfluous for large parts of the American administration (though certainly not all); or one must explain why Britain went along with a partner with a half-baked plan for an invasion. There are no indications that the former was the case. Perhaps the prime minister comes closest to following the neoconservative view that no preparation was needed; not because of neoconservative views but as a result of his optimism and dislike of details. However, even Tony Blair, whenever he was confronted with the question of preparation, indicated the British civil service should prepare for an 'exemplary' role and make available what was needed. As for the FCO and DFID, indications are that they were deeply worried about the lack of post-war planning.

In other words, two elements remain that merit attention and analysis. The first is that those plans for the aftermath that were made by Britain, were internally incoherent and unsuited for the invasion that the UK chose to pursue. The second is that despite this – and despite, it would seem, being aware of this to at least a certain extent – Britain *did* go to war under

¹⁶⁹ Chilcott, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 18-20.

circumstances it would have previously deemed unacceptable. This puzzle, which has not yet been addressed fully, is the precise topic of this dissertation. Indeed, the argument of this dissertation is that these two failures are connected. How Britain decided on war impacted how it was able to prepare for this war. For this reason, we cannot content ourselves to knowing why the United Kingdom invaded alongside the United States (to the extent that such a consensus has emerged). We must also understand the failure to be properly prepared; that this failure can be (partly) addressed by a *structural* mechanism, the preferred alternative, that is applicable not only to Iraq; and whether such planning failures can be avoided in future. That is the contribution of this dissertation.

It is worth restating clearly at this point that my goal is not to explain the British failure *on the ground* in Iraq. Indeed, my metric of failure is not the post-war situation on the ground (unlike virtually all academic work on Iraq). I do not argue that British policy preparation was bad because it failed to provide good results in Iraq. After all – as follows from Steele’s argument – it is in principle possible to have the best possible preparation and still lose a war or an invasion. Defeat is not an appropriate metric for the quality of preparation. Therefore, instead I judge the quality of preparation and plans by several conditions that have the *propensity* to bring about good results. These are that good plans are internally coherent; that they are appropriate (rationally connecting ends and means); and well-developed.

The argument of this dissertation, introduced in the next chapter, is that the systematic use of the ‘preferred alternative’ is more likely to lead to internally coherent, well-developed, appropriate plans. Note that it is perfectly possible to have plans that are internally coherent, well-developed, and appropriate without ever establishing a preferred alternative. Likewise, establishing a preferred alternative does not automatically mean plans will be internally coherent or well-developed. The independent and dependent variable are both theoretically and practically distinct. However, as theorized in the next chapter and demonstrated in the empirical chapter, the systematic use of preferred alternatives makes better plans (defined as coherent, developed, and appropriate) more likely.

7. CONCLUSION

This chapter started off by setting out existing FPA of the British involvement in the Iraq conflict. Much of this analysis has focused on Tony Blair’s personality and characteristics. A constraint challenger with a high need for power, a tendency to black-and-white thinking and a high belief in himself, Tony Blair was willing to go against substantial domestic opposition

to pursue his preferred policy.¹⁷⁰ Whether he did so under false pretences remains a matter of debate. Hoggett has argued that the Prime Minister must be understood as *self-deceiving*.¹⁷¹ Daddow, meanwhile, explains Tony Blair's Iraq choices as the choices of someone who came into power with no articular interest in foreign policy and who was subsequently shaped by his military success in the Kosovo campaign.¹⁷² Biographers, by contrast, have focused on his upbringing and religious beliefs to account for his policy tendencies.¹⁷³

Other writers remind us not to consider British Iraq policy in a vacuum. Williams reminds us that policy is made by a variety of actors and that, although British Iraq policy in 2001-2003 is often considered as a radical break with the past, three rather traditional ideas underlay Labours foreign policy agenda: multilateralism, Atlanticism, and neoliberalism.¹⁷⁴ O'Malley highlights the options prime ministers have to impact policy by structuring the choices other actors face.¹⁷⁵ Kettell focuses on the features of the British political system, which according to him promotes strong leadership and fails to provide formal checks and balances.¹⁷⁶ Strong, however, also points out that systems change and traces the growth of the parliamentary prerogative to decide on war in the years since Iraq.¹⁷⁷ The wider context of Anglo-American relations has also widely been understood as a factor shaping British Iraq policy. Danchev puts the so-called Special Relationship in historical perspective.¹⁷⁸ Most scholars, including Porter, are sceptical of the actual existence of a relationship that is extraordinary enough to be special.¹⁷⁹ Certainly, the consensus is that Britain came out of the Iraq episode impaired.

¹⁷⁰ Dyson, "Personality And Foreign Policy: Tony Blair's Iraq Decisions", 289-306.

Dyson, "Alliances, Domestic Politics, and Leader Psychology: Why Did Britain Stay out of Vietnam and Go into Iraq?", 647-666.

¹⁷¹ Hoggett, "Iraq: Blair's Mission Impossible", 418-428.

¹⁷² Daddow, "Tony's War? Blair, Kosovo and the Interventionist Impulse in British Foreign Policy", 547-560.

¹⁷³ Rentoul, *Tony Blair*.

Kampfner, *Blair's Wars*.

Seldon, *Blair*.

¹⁷⁴ Williams, "Who's Making UK Foreign Policy?", 911-929.

¹⁷⁵ O'Malley, "Setting Choices, Controlling Outcomes: The Operation Of Prime Ministerial Influence And The UK's Decision To Invade Iraq", 1-19.

¹⁷⁶ Kettell, "The Curious Incident Of The Dog That Didn't Bark In The Night-Time: Structure And Agency In Britain's War With Iraq", 417.

¹⁷⁷ Strong, "Why Parliament Now Decides On War: Tracing The Growth Of The Parliamentary Prerogative Through Syria, Libya And Iraq", 604-622.

¹⁷⁸ Danchev, "Tony Blair's Vietnam: The Iraq War and the 'Special Relationship' in Historical Perspective", 189-203.

¹⁷⁹ Porter, "Last charge of the knights? Iraq, Afghanistan and the special relationship", 355-375.

Wither, "British Bulldog or Bush's Poodle? Anglo-American Relations and the Iraq War", 67-82.

Sharp, "Tony Blair, Iraq and the Special Relationship: Poodle or Partner?", 59-86.

To understand the Iraq conflict, however, we must not only understand the factors that shaped British policy. We must also understand what precisely *the British case for war was*. This case can be summarized (roughly) as follows: Saddam Hussein is a threat and Britain, like the rest of the international community, must address this threat.¹⁸⁰ The usual method of containment is not good enough, both because it fails to depose Saddam Hussein and because it leads to great humanitarian suffering, which is wrong in itself and which also makes containment politically unviable. Moreover, 9/11 shows terrorists willing to attack as lethally as possible. This raises the spectre of a combination of terrorism and weapons of mass destruction. We cannot be sure that Saddam Hussein currently has weapons of mass destruction, but we can safely assume he has bad intentions and a bad record, which makes him a big enough risk even without further intelligence. 9/11 also jolts the United States in action, which provides a window of opportunity to deal with Saddam Hussein – which in any case had always been the right course of action. It is the moral duty of the international community to face this danger together, but if the Security Council fails to act, that does not excuse Britain from not fulfilling its moral duty.

Thus, Britain joins the American invasion. Given the security risk posed by Saddam Hussein, something must happen. Out of two options – further containment and military disarmament – one is wrong for humanitarian reasons and ineffective in addressing the security concern: containment leaves Saddam Hussein in power to oppress minorities, sanctions hurt the Iraqi population further and the Iraqi leader seems to be able to work his way around sanctions to a significant extent. Hence the British government takes the least evil road and invades Iraq. To be clear, I argue that this case is illogical and unfairly argued. It portrays Britain's Iraq options as dichotomous, failing to engage with the option of Smart Sanctions. It has an element of catastrophic thinking. Most importantly, sanctions are dismissed because they are not guaranteed to work, but the alternative of an invasion is not even submitted to that same litmus test. Thus, policy is made using unfair limitations and incoherent metrics.

The American reasons for going to war were and are hotly debated by the public and academics alike.¹⁸¹ There is no agreement why America went to war when it did; whether weapons of mass destruction were a genuine worry of the American administration (and if so, of which parts of the US Administration); whether 9/11 provided a rationale or a window of opportunity.¹⁸² Nor is the precise role of the neoconservative faction within government

¹⁸⁰ This summary is based on Bluth, "The British Road to War: Blair, Bush and the Decision to Invade Iraq."

¹⁸¹ Cramer and Thrall, *Why Did the United States Invade Iraq?*

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, 13.

clear.¹⁸³ It has been convincingly established that they pushed for a stronger take on Iraq well before 9/11 (and, for many, before they were in government), but it is unclear whether they convinced the president or whether Bush and others were willing to take stronger action against Baghdad in any case.¹⁸⁴

It is clear that the Americans extensively planned for Phase III of the war, which involved toppling Baghdad and 'liberating' the country. It is equally clear that not much preparation was done to prepare for any occupation of Iraq. Dodge has convincingly argued that this can partly be attributed to a failure to see the need for much planning to build up the state, as the American analysis of the Iraqi problem concluded that the Iraqi state was too *strong* rather than too weak.¹⁸⁵ Similarly, exiled Iraqis were giving a rosy picture of Iraq after the liberation.¹⁸⁶ However, this is likely not the full story. There seem to also have been more banal problems such as no clear, unambiguous locus of responsibility for the post-war phase within the Administration; personality and departmental clashes preventing coordination; and a glossing over differences which meant that contradictory plans could be made.¹⁸⁷ Examples of the latter are questions on whether there would be long transition period before power would be handed over to the Iraqis (and to which Iraqis), as well as an assumption in certain plans that parts of the Iraqi army would be kept whereas this decision was reversed soon after the invasion by Bremer.¹⁸⁸

Various arguments have been put forward to explain this American lack of planning; it is important to articulate why these worthwhile contributions nonetheless do not answer the question asked in this dissertation. That question is the following: how did Britain fail to develop appropriate plans for the conflict in Iraq, most notably for the post-war phase, and decide to nonetheless participate in the American-led invasion under conditions it would have previously deemed unacceptable?

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ Dodge, "Coming face to face with bloody reality: Liberal common sense and the ideological failure of the Bush Doctrine in Iraq".

Dodge, "The Causes Of US Failure In Iraq".

Dodge, "The Ideological Roots Of Failure: The Application Of Kinetic Neo-Liberalism To Iraq".

¹⁸⁶ Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, 259.

¹⁸⁷ Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, 281.

Woodward, *State of Denial*, no page (Kindle book).

Feith, *War and Decision*, 292..

¹⁸⁸ Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, 206.

Coalition Provisional Authority, *Coalition Provisional Authority Order Number 1: De-Ba'athification Of Iraqi Society*, 2003.

The first argument that needs to be engaged with is the idea that the failure to prepare can be explained not as a failure to implement planning preparation, but as a failure to recognise the need for planning.¹⁸⁹ This line of argument would build on the idea that those in charge of making Iraq policy had ideological reasons to believe that post-invasion planning was unnecessary and therefore did not attempt to plan. I demonstrate that this line of thinking is not sufficient – nor necessary – to explain the British failure to prepare for Phase IV. In Britain, at least, the need to prepare was recognised. The concept was honoured in the breach at all times.

There is no reason to believe this honouring in the breach was disingenuous; there are many elements that indicate most and perhaps all key actors in the British system believed in and recognised the need to prepare. It is the failure to act on these insights that needs to be explained. This is true even if Britain resumed the US would be responsible for most of the Phase IV planning: Britain realised such planning was necessary; it knew it was missing; it nonetheless went to war with this lack of plan. Moreover, as demonstrated at length in the empirical chapters, the problem was not just that Americans did not see the need for Phase IV planning: British planning too was incoherent, inappropriate, and underdeveloped. This remains to be explained.

The second alternative explanation for failure is the idea that the war in Iraq could not be won for reasons internal to Iraq.¹⁹⁰ This line of thought suggests that conditions in Iraq meant that the ambitions embraced by the United States and (without much thought) by the United Kingdom were never realistic. Failure in Iraq, therefore, must be understood as a function of goals that were impossible to begin with because of circumstances outside of Britain. I do not deny that there might have been causes for failure intrinsic to the country of Iraq. Nor, however, is this incompatible with my argument, which is that the preparation done by Britain was internally contradictory. Moreover, this new argument opens new perspectives for lessons on how to avoid this type of policy failure, important in and of itself. If one argues that Iraq cannot be invaded (and rebuild) successfully, the lesson to take away is: do not invade Iraq. My analysis allows for a different and additional kind of lesson: how to avoid internal incoherence in your plans. The applicability and importance of this lesson is broader than to warn politicians about repeating the invasion of Iraq.

¹⁸⁹ Dodge, "Coming face to face with bloody reality: Liberal common sense and the ideological failure of the Bush Doctrine in Iraq".

Dodge, "The Causes Of US Failure In Iraq".

Dodge, "The Ideological Roots Of Failure: The Application Of Kinetic Neo-Liberalism To Iraq".

¹⁹⁰ Steele, *Defeat: Losing Iraq and the Future of the Middle East*.

Chapter II: The Importance of Knowing What You Want

1. INTRODUCTION

This dissertation *identifies* a problem in 2001-2003 Iraq policy: the plans prepared were not suitable for the policy eventually chosen. It gives an argument about the *root cause* of this problem: there was no clarity about the limits of the policy pursued by the government. It also gives a *remedy* that would have prevented such a lack of clarity: the conscious use of a 'preferred alternative to the pursued policy'. This dissertation thus makes claims about the content of British Iraq policy as well as about the policy-making *process*. The last chapter introduced existing understandings of British Iraq policy; this chapter introduces the dissertation's arguments about the policy-making process. The first argument is that governments, in this case the British government, should have clear limits when defining their foreign policies, in this case Iraq policy. The second and principal argument is that those limits, or minimal requirements, are best established by consciously determining the preferred alternative to the pursued policy, a tool analogous to the well-known 'best alternative to a negotiated agreement'.

This 'best alternative to a negotiated agreement', or BATNA, finds its origins in the Harvard Negotiation Project. It was meant as a practical tool to help negotiators determine whether they should accept a proposed deal or walk away from the negotiations. I argue that the concept can be adapted and extended to be of use in foreign policy decision-making (where I will call it the 'preferred alternative' to the pursued policy). Indeed, in such circumstances, the preferred alternative and the 'minimal requirements' that can be derived from it have benefits beyond those originally envisaged by Fisher and Ury: they enhance the interdepartmental coherence of policy and the communication between government and civil service. After introducing the original and the reworked concept, I detail how the transfer of the original concept to a foreign policy decision-making context is plausible.

The next section then addresses how the preferred alternative fits in with existing understandings of foreign policy decision-making. Discussing rationalist and cognitive models of decision-making, I argue that the former pose problems of process validity, whereas the latter are weaker on outcome validity. For the purposes of my argument, however, it is crucial that any theory in which I locate the dissertation has *both* process and outcome validity, as I propose a heuristic tool – the preferred alternative – to achieve better

policy outcomes. To be workable, the preferred alternative must be compatible with *how* policy-makers decide on foreign policy; to be useful, it must be compatible with ensuring good *outcomes*. I go on to argue that poliheuristic theory has good results on both counts. This is where I locate my contribution to the FPA literature.

The argument of this chapter is not merely that the transfer of BATNAs from a negotiation context to a foreign policy-making context can work; it is also that the use of the preferred alternative has *additional* benefits not attributed to the original BATNA. As set out in the fifth section, the preferred alternative allows governments to delineate more clearly the limits of the policy it intends to pursue (by providing an alternative to which the original policy can be benchmarked). This determining of 'minimal requirements' is likely to keep policy better defined, coordinated, and less likely to be subject to drift. I briefly set out how this argument relates to existing understandings of principal-agent problems.

The next three sections are more practical. The first discusses how preferred alternatives are to be used in practice, providing a set of guidelines to better illuminate how the theory can be made to work. It stresses that the tool proposed in this chapter should not be expected to be a fail-safe way to make policy; rather, it makes good policy and good policy outcomes *more* likely. This is true even if policy-makers will not, for practical reasons, manage to use the preferred alternative perfectly. The comparison to the policy goal and strategy illuminates this. The second section sets out how this chapter's argument will be applied, in the rest of the dissertation, to the British preparation for the invasion of Iraq. The last section, meanwhile, discuss my methodology, including source selection and working methods during the empirical research.

This chapter's goal is to introduce the concept of the preferred alternative to a pursued policy and corresponding minimal requirements. The argument is that without a preferred alternative, governments are more likely to be ill-prepared for the policies they end up pursuing; they are also more likely to make a suboptimal choice in negotiations because without knowledge of their preferred alternative, they have lost both their leverage and their capacity to clearly assess the merits of the negotiated agreement offered to them. The following four chapters will argue that this is exactly what happened to British Iraq policy between 2001 and 2003. Chapters III-V will describe the development of the United Kingdom's Iraq policy from 9/11 to the March 2003 invasion of Iraq in new empirical research. Chapter VI will summarize these developments from the angle set out in this chapter.

2. BEST ALTERNATIVES IN NEGOTIATIONS: THE ORIGINAL CONCEPT

The Harvard Negotiation Project – since renamed to Program on Negotiation – was set up in 1979 to study negotiation and conflict resolution.¹⁹¹ It was (and is) conceived as a practical project. As a result from this project, in 1981 Roger Fisher and William Ury published their now-famous *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement without Giving In*.¹⁹² The book is a practical guide to negotiations and focuses on the concept of ‘principled negotiation’, to find durable solutions for all parties involved. The book has since become a staple of negotiation training in countries across the world.

One of the concepts made widely known by the publication of *Getting to Yes* was that of a so-called ‘BATNA’, the ‘best alternative to a negotiated agreement’. In negotiations, the argument goes, people should consider their best available path if the negotiation were to break down. This ‘best alternative’ should then be used as a benchmark to decide whether to accept the final deal offered in the negotiations or whether to walk away. This idea is straightforward: people negotiate because they expect ‘to produce something better than the results you can obtain without negotiating’.¹⁹³ If the result is worse than what you could have obtained without the negotiations, you would be better off walking away from the table. In other words, people should compare any offer in the negotiations to the best they would be able to get by walking away: their best alternative to a negotiated solution. ‘That is the standard against which any proposed agreement should be measured’.¹⁹⁴

This might sound trivially true; Fisher and Ury argued that it is not. They wrote that when people prepare for negotiations, they usually have a ‘bottom line’ in mind: an idea of how far they are willing to go in the negotiations. However, negotiating with such a bottom line in mind has drawbacks as well as advantages:

Negotiators commonly try to protect themselves against [accepting an outcome they ought to reject] by establishing in advance the worst acceptable outcome – their ‘bottom line’. (...) Having a bottom line makes it easier to resist pressure and temptations of the moment. (...) But the protection afforded by adopting a bottom line involves high costs. It limits your ability to benefit from what you learn during negotiation (...) inhibits imagination (...) [and] is likely to be set too high. An arbitrarily selected [bottom line] is no measure of what you should accept.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹¹ Program on Negotiation at Harvard Law School, “About the Harvard Negotiation Project,” 2009, http://www.pon.harvard.edu/research_projects/harvard-negotiation-project/hnp/.

¹⁹² Fisher, Ury, and Patton, *Getting To Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In*, 102.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 102.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 102.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 100-101.

In other words, people will often set limits on what they are willing to accept, but they do not typically do so by considering their alternatives. Yet they ought to be considering their best alternative to a negotiated agreement for two distinct reasons. The first is the straightforward assumption that people want the outcome that they consider best. If this is true, it only makes sense to compare the available options and pick the best one – which is exactly what a BATNA does. Yet Fisher and Ury have a second reason for focusing on the BATNA rather than bottom lines *per se*: their focus is on creating win/win situation, and an overly narrow focus on bottom lines might hinder people to come up with alternatives.

The heads of the Harvard Negotiation Project also observed that those without a clear idea of their BATNA might become overly optimistic or pessimistic about their alternatives beyond the negotiated agreement.¹⁹⁶ In most circumstances, they argue, ‘the greater danger is that you are too committed to reaching agreement. Not having developed any alternative to a negotiated solution, you are unduly pessimistic about what would happen if negotiations broke off.’¹⁹⁷ Fear of the unknown and wishful thinking about the outcome of the negotiation combined can lead parties to accept even negotiated agreements they ought to reject. Sometimes the opposite happens: people are overly optimistic about their alternatives, for instances because they consider all the alternatives they have without considering that these alternatives are mutually exclusive¹⁹⁸: If I did not go to graduate school, I could earn a lot of money, or travel, or set up my own company, or spend more time with my children. A BATNA thus is not only useful if negotiations fail: it is valuable for the ongoing negotiation itself. BATNAs should not just be a fall-back option; they are an integral part of the initial negotiations.

Even when still pursuing negotiations, understanding, choosing, and developing a BATNA is crucial because ‘[a]ttractive alternatives are not just sitting there waiting for you: you usually have to develop them’.¹⁹⁹ Not choosing a BATNA might leave people unsure or insecure about their options and lead them to accept an unnecessarily negative outcome rather than walk away from the negotiation table. But not developing the BATNA can also force people to accept a worse-than-necessary deal at the negotiation table because this lack of preparation has foreclosed the best alternative. Indeed, negotiating parties that fail to prepare a viable best alternative during their negotiations might well be justified in their fear for the

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 102-103.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 103.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 102-103.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 105.

unknown alternative and their desire to settle in less than ideal circumstances. A well-developed BATNA would prevent this from occurring.

3. PREFERRED ALTERNATIVES IN FOREIGN POLICY DECISION-MAKING

This dissertation applies the core concept of the ‘best alternative to a negotiated agreement’ to a different environment, namely that of policy makers making internal decisions on which policy option to pursue. To distinguish between the original concept and the modified version proposed in this dissertation, the new version will here be called the ‘preferred alternative’. This not only helps distinguish the original concept from the modified use proposed here: in choosing the words ‘preferred alternative’, I also stress that in many scenarios, there might be a limited number of *several* alternatives for which one could reasonably argue, rather than one clearly superior, objectively best alternative policy. My argument is not about *which* alternative should prevail in intragovernmental decision-making, but rather that agreement about the preferred alternative is crucial. Likewise, on the topic of the Iraq war, the argument is *not* that Tony Blair’s preferred alternative to disarmament via the Security Council was the wrong choice. The argument is rather that the confusion about which alternative was the preferred alternative wreaked havoc on the government’s capacity to prepare in a timely and relevant manner.

However, it should also be clear that while I call it a ‘preferred alternative’, I refer to the one alternative that the government has a whole has identified as the alternative of choice in case the original policy needs to be abandoned. Two elements are important. First, this alternative of choice does not refer to what would be chosen in an ideal world. ‘Preferred alternative’ does not refer to the ideal alternative in a perfect world that would be hypothetically preferable. Rather, it refers to that choice of alternative that has been identified, given the circumstances, as the government’s preferred option if the first policy were to fail. Second, *not everyone without government* needs to prefer this alternative. It is quite possible that different people or departments have different private (or even public) preferences. ‘Preferred alternative’, again, means only that the people with decision-making power have decided that this is the alternative that is, on balance, given circumstances, the preferred way of handling the failure of the original policy.

The core argument of this chapter is the following: **when formulating foreign policy, politicians and other policy-makers should not only determine their foreign policy goal and their strategy (as they habitually do). They should also, already at the time when they are still determining and then pursuing this original policy, determine their preferred alternative if this first policy must be abandoned. Moreover, they should use**

this new-found sense of their preferred alternative to determine the minimal requirements they wish to attach to the policy they are pursuing. In other words, a foreign policy stance should consist of four elements instead of the usual two: not only of policy goal and strategy, but also of preferred alternative and corresponding minimal requirements.

What do I mean by minimal requirements (a concept only implicitly present in *Getting to Yes*)? Very few policy goals are worth pursuing at all costs and under all circumstances. There thus being limitations to the applicability of each policy option, policy-makers should be mindful of those limitations to prevent choosing policies that are no(t) (longer) suitable for the circumstances. Thus, they should establish the limits of any foreign policy goal they intend to pursue. Of course, one might argue that to do so, politicians and other policy-makers should simply establish 'red lines', that is to say non-negotiable, fixed conditions that trigger certain reactions, including the enactment or abandonment of a certain policy. The many cartoons about Obama drawing red lines for Syria are but one reminder of this idea of red lines as part of smart policy-making.

However, the insight of the Harvard Negotiation Program is precisely the idea that *random* red lines (what Ury and Fisher call 'bottom lines') are *not* the best way of determining one's position. As they put it regarding negotiations:

The reason you negotiate is to produce something better than the results you can obtain without negotiating. What are those results? What is that alternative? (...) *That* is the standard against which any proposed agreement should be measured.²⁰⁰ (my emphasis)

Similarly, one should abandon a policy if not abandoning it would lead to worse. But one can only make that judgement by *comparing* the policy one is pursuing with the alternative one would have if one decided to abandon the original policy. Abandoning one policy to end up in a *worse* situation does not constitute a wise course of action. Only your assessment of your next best option – your preferred alternative (or 'best alternative' in Ury and Fisher's language) – can give you a clear indication of whether to stick with a certain policy. Thus, just as your negotiation limits should depend on your best alternative to the negotiated agreement, your 'red lines' in foreign policy decision-making should depend on your chosen preferred alternative – your best plan-B – to the policy you originally tried to pursue. Red lines thus defined are what I refer to as 'minimal requirements'.

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 102.

How would the preferred alternative relate to the original policy (which is a combination of a goal and a strategy)? Depending on the scenario, the preferred alternative could involve a change of strategy, an adjustment of the goal, or a combination of those. The minimal requirements are the circumstances under which a change of policy would be triggered. Of course, this 'preferred alternative' can change as circumstances change and as policy-makers' evaluation or judgements change – much in the same way that policy goals and other aspects of policy-making can change as circumstances change. The important element, however, is that although this preferred alternative can be subject to change, it should be established *at the same time* when the original policy – policy A – is made. Policy-makers should not await the failure of policy A before defining their preferred alternative.

Just as it is possible for reasonable policy-makers to disagree with each other on what a certain policy should be, it is possible for reasonable policy-makers to disagree on what the alternative should be if the first policy were to fail. Indeed, this is one reason the preferred alternative should be explicitly defined: it is not self-evident. We are not, therefore, looking for policy-makers to define the very 'best' alternative by one invariable objective metric, although we do reasonably expect them to advocate for what they think is the best course of action for their government at that particular time, by the metrics they judge most appropriate. Nor do we expect them to choose their 'preferred' option in a hypothetical world where all conceivable options would be on the table. Rather, we expect them to judge, to the best of their capacities, what alternative routes would be available if the first policy were to fail; and we expect them to agree on *one* preferred alternative to be shared across government and the civil service, much in the same way that they determine a policy goal and strategy.

4. TRANSFERABILITY OF THE CONCEPT

Applying the concept of the BATNA in a foreign policy decision-making context as a preferred alternative raises questions of transferability. Indeed, while the value of the concept will be best proven by its application to a variety of cases – of which this dissertation proposes a first one – it is worth reflecting on the underlying assumptions on circumstances that constrain the original BATNA and ask whether these are similar to the circumstances in which I deploy the preferred alternative, to see whether such a transfer is likely to be successful. Four elements will be discussed in turn: (the idea) that the BATNA presumes one decision-maker, whereas the preferred alternative assumes shared decision-making amongst policy-makers as well as a bureaucracy to implement those decisions; that the BATNA is focused on a specific negotiation with a topic, unlike foreign policy-making; that the BATNA deals with a

minimum of one other party, whereas the preferred alternative is chosen in a circumstance in which there is not necessary another party; and that a BATNA is conceptualised as being used when the decision-maker is pursuing one goal, whereas policy-makers using preferred alternatives are pursuing a wide agenda of goals or policies at the same time.

One decision-maker versus shared decision-making

The direct style in which it is written might suggest that *Getting to Yes* would be aimed at the individual negotiator (the 'you' to whom the authors are directly speaking). Indeed, the recommendations that are given seem personal and might involve understanding your constituency, but do not focus on the importance of reaching agreement within one's ingroup before negotiating nor on the challenges that exist herein. The focus is on the engagement of the negotiating individual with the other side. That is not to say, though, that the many real-life examples in the book focus on individuals negotiating on their own behalf. On the contrary, the book extensively references IR or foreign policy problems: the Western Sahara, the Irish peace agreement, the Law of the Sea Conference, India and Pakistan on the water of the Indus River, the Vietnam war, the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty, and so on.²⁰¹

In other words, the recommendations made in the book are meant to also – explicitly – apply to protracted problems of foreign policy. By virtue of how these problems are engaged with in the international realm, and given the authors' experience, it is therefore clear that these recommendations were (also) meant for use by negotiators who were representing the view of a government. Although the internal difficulties of coming to a foreign policy position (and by extension a negotiation stance) are not the subject of the book, they are compatible with the book. Indeed, *Getting to Yes* focuses on how negotiators should craft their negotiation stance, by given four general guidelines (separate the people from the problem; focus on interests; invent options for mutual gain; insist on objective criteria) and a number of more specific techniques (develop a BATNA among them). However, it is clear that often negotiators, such as diplomats, only follow the instructions given by capitals. The lessons in the book, including that of the BATNA, should therefore be interpreted to apply not only to the individual speaking at the negotiation table, but all those involved in crafting the policy.

That a bureaucracy is often needed to implement decisions reached is again no objection *per se* against the approaches used in the book. The foreign policy examples in the book in practice all were implemented by institutions and organisations larger than one individual. This was not the scope of *Getting to Yes*, but the lessons were clearly meant for large

²⁰¹ Ibid., 22, 26-27, 47-48, 67, 70.

organisations and governments as well. In other words, it is not so much that I argue that the idea of a BATNA is transferable from one decision-maker to shared decision-making situations: rather, I argue that a close reading of *Getting to Yes* suggests that this was the intention – although not the focus – all along.

Negotiation on one defined topic versus foreign policy-making on an issue

Negotiations presume a relatively defined topic. This matters for the use of a BATNA as far as a BATNA cannot be determined if there is no definition of topic. A 'preferred alternative' on anything to anything is not understandable, not useful, and cannot be evaluated. In other words, for a preferred alternative to be useful in a foreign policy context, there must equally be a relatively defined topic of interest. I argue that in foreign policy, this is typically the case. As foreign policy issues emerge, they do so within a temporal, geographical, cultural, and historical context. The foreign policy issue comes to the attention of policy-makers to a large extent predefined. (Indeed, how these topics emerge and get defined, is a research area in its own right, albeit one that falls outside the scope of this dissertation.) There are only a limited number of routes that can be envisaged, taken, or implemented. Thus, I would argue that in foreign policy topics as in negotiations, the problem is rarely that the topic is not defined enough: rather, the bigger issue might be that it is framed so narrowly as to prohibit creative understandings of or solutions to the problem. This suggests that preferred alternatives can be meaningfully used in a foreign policy context as well as in a more specific negotiation context. In that sense, too, the idea of the BATNA is transferable to a foreign policy context more generally.

Negotiating with a party versus acting in foreign policy

Negotiation presupposes interaction with another player. However, the same is true of foreign policy. By its nature, the foreign policy of a government will impact other actors. In negotiations, one is in a position where one has both common and divergent interests with another party or other parties. If one were to have no common interests, there would be no basis for negotiation at all; without divergence in interests there would be no need. As Schelling has pointed out, whether others are conceived as friends or enemies makes little difference from the point of view of strategically dealing with them: even friends have some divergences in priorities and concerns and even the severest enemies usually have some common interests (for example, to not make Earth unliveable).²⁰²

²⁰² Thomas C. Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1963), 11.

To that extent, even if one is not in formalized conversation with others, such as would be the case in open negotiations, one is impacting and being impacted by others with whom one has divergences and shared interests. These others are likely to react to your foreign policy, too. For that reason, estimating the reactions of different actors when making foreign policy, and seeing whether these reactions should be accommodated, punished, or ignored, is similar in foreign policy-making as in formal negotiations. So then, is the possibility of conceiving of the best alternative to determining whether a given policy course is worth its cost.

Dealing with one issue versus pursuing multiple foreign policy goals

A BATNA is a tool in a context wherein the decision-maker has one goal (a good outcome to the negotiations), whereas policy-makers typically pursue a wide agenda of goals or policies at the same time. Does this harm the transferability of the concept to a policy-making context? I would argue that it does not, for two reasons. First, even in the original conceptualisation of the BATNA, which is used during negotiations, these negotiations themselves usually take place in a context in which government (and people within government) have multiple goals. Indeed, the majority of examples discussed in *Getting to Yes* are foreign policy episodes.²⁰³ Second, and more fundamentally, there is no reason that the preferred alternative, or indeed the first policy that is being pursued by the government, should only take into account concerns related most narrowly to the topic at hand. This dissertation does not prescribe a particular, narrow metric by which to determine the preferred alternative; it stresses the importance of choosing *one* preferred alternative, shared across government. Thus, I would argue, firstly, that BATNAs were already used in a context where negotiators have multiple goals and, secondly, the preferred alternatives in any case have this scope. The BATNA can thus be meaningfully introduced to foreign policy-maker as the 'preferred alternative'.

5. PREFERRED ALTERNATIVES AND POLIHEURISTIC THEORY

How does the argument about preferred alternatives fit in with existing conceptions of foreign policy-decision making? Insights in decisions made by people can roughly be divided in two types: rationalist models and cognitive models. The crux of this debate is the following: are decisions best explained by an assumption that people have connected, transitive desires which they try to realise through purposeful, instrumental action (rationalist school); or are they best explained through a focus on the various cognitive and

²⁰³ See for example Fisher, Ury, and Patton, *Getting To Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In*, 22, 26-27, 47-48, 67, 70.

psychological processes that distort the ways in which humans make decisions (cognitive school)? In the field of international relations as a whole, the rational actor model remains the leading paradigm (often with the *state* as the rational actor, rather than the various humans that make the foreign policy of that state). In Foreign Policy Analysis, however, with its explicit focus on the human decision-maker and with its interest in *how* decisions get made as well as *what* decisions get made, the debate has been livelier.

Bueno de Mesquita (and Lalman) can be cited as a prime proponent of the rational model, in which forward-looking leaders make decisions on the basis of “the value they attach to alternative outcomes and the beliefs they hold regarding how their adversary will respond to their strategic decisions”.²⁰⁴ In this logic, actors are assumed to have the time, processing power, knowledge, and skills necessary to make optimal decisions in near-perfect conditions. Other cognitive models likewise presume an optimising, (expected-)utility-maximizing decision-maker, but work on the assumption that the rationality of actors is circumscribed as their decisions are made under various constraints. Either way, these models presume that all facets of the problem can be reduced to *one* dimension (expected utility), which is then measured to select the best outcome.

This has two implications. The first is that such models are compensatory models: “in choice situations, if a certain alternative (e.g., use of force) is low on a given dimension then a high score on another dimension can compensate for it, and hence the alternative is adopted”. The second is that such an approach ultimately reduces all considered elements of all possible outcomes to one dimension (expected utility), as if policy-makers have only one goal. Such analytic models have been successfully used to predict policy decisions and outcomes. However, even a cursory glance at the cognitive literature on *how* people make suggestions, makes clear that such rational weighing up of all possible options along one dimension in a transitive way is *not* how humans do, in fact, make decisions. Indeed, many studies on foreign policy have detailed a variety of cognitive shortcuts to rational decision-making that people adopt when faced with complexity or uncertainty.²⁰⁵ These works show that ‘decision makers

²⁰⁴ Bruce Bueno de Mesquita and David Lalman, “Domestic And International Imperatives In The Specification Of Foreign Policy Objectives”, in *Agenda Formation* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1993), 131.

²⁰⁵ Alex Mintz, “The Decision To Attack Iraq: A Noncompensatory Theory Of Decision Making”, *Journal Of Conflict Resolution* 37, no. 4 (1993): 598.

Robert Jervis, Richard Ned Lebow and Janice Gross Stein, *Psychology And Deterrence* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985).

Gregory M. Herek, Irving L. Janis and Paul Huth, “Decision Making During International Crises”, *Journal Of Conflict Resolution* 31, no. 2 (1987): 203-226.

often process information in a different way from that suggested by the expected utility and cybernetic political use of force models'.²⁰⁶ In other words, they indicate severe cognitive limits on the rationalist approach to foreign policy-making.

How to weigh these two different approaches? To some extent, the cognitive-rationalist debate can be understood as a discussion between the importance of *outcome validity* versus that of *process validity*.²⁰⁷ Rational actor models have had great success in predicting policy outcomes even though much of the research coming from the cognitive school suggests that the rational model is a poor reflection of how decisions actually get made.²⁰⁸ The cognitive approach, meanwhile, while generally recognised to provide more insight into the way in which decisions are made, has struggled to generate as much predictive (or even postdictive) explanatory power as rational approaches.²⁰⁹

For the purposes of this thesis, however, neither is sufficient. It is crucial that any theory of foreign policy decision-making in which we locate our argument has *both* outcome validity and process validity. Some of the main arguments underlying this dissertation are (a) that policy-making in the lead-up to the invasion of Iraq can be better understood through the lens of the preferred alternative and (b) that foreign policy decision-making can be improved using the concept of the preferred alternative. As these arguments are about the policy-making *process* – how decisions are (not) made and how they should be made – a plausible case must be made that the preferred alternative, as a heuristic tool, is indeed compatible with how policy is actually made.

At the same time, the goal of improving policy-making by determining a preferred alternative is outcome-based: I am not arguing for the inclusion of a preferred alternative because I think it would make the process better, with the process as the end goal. Rather, the argument underlying this dissertation is that the systematic use of the preferred alternative would improve the process *and thereby policy outcomes*. Herek, Janis and Huth have studied the relationship between process and outcome in foreign policy and find that poor-quality procedures in decision-making lead to avoidable errors that increase the likelihood of

John D Steinbruner, *The Cybernetic Theory Of Decision: New Dimensions Of Political Analysis* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1974).

Alexander L. George, *Presidential decisionmaking in foreign policy: The effective use of information and advice* (Boulder: Westview, 1980).

²⁰⁶ Alex Mintz, "The Decision To Attack Iraq: A Noncompensatory Theory Of Decision Making", 614.

²⁰⁷ Alex Mintz (ed.), *Integrating Cognitive And Rational Theories Of Foreign Policy Decision Making* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002): 102.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., 12-13.

unsatisfactory outcomes.²¹⁰ Our goal is to improve decision-making procedures in a way that is easy enough to be realistically implementable (especially important *given* that humans tend to use shortcuts when confronted with demanding cognitive tasks) and targeted enough to improve policy-making. Thus, the preferred alternative needs to be compatible with theories that reasonably predict policy outcomes.

Luckily, the cognitive-rationalist debate has moved forward in a promising way in the last twenty-five years by the development of poliheuristic theory – and it is here that preferred alternatives fit in the existing FPA literature. At its core, poliheuristic theory argues that foreign policy decision-makers use a variety of strategies in the decision-making process.²¹¹ More specifically, two phases can be distinguished.²¹² In the first stage, policy-makers weed out policy-options that are not good enough *tout court*, before moving on to a second stage, in which the remaining options are compared and a choice is thus made. The first phase of this process is non-compensatory: the evaluation of options does not happen in an alternative-based way, in which each alternative is considered in its different facets (and in which a high score on one aspect can compensate for a weak score on another aspect, as is the case with compensatory decision strategies).²¹³ Rather, a dimension-based search finds place. If a particular option is underwhelming in a crucial dimension, it disappears of the table altogether *without* an evaluation of the other aspects of that option.²¹⁴

In the second phase, by contrast, policy-makers do move to an alternative-based strategy. They look at the remaining choice set – those policy options that have not been weeded out – and, at this stage, having weeded out that which is not good enough, try to choose the best solution. At this point decision-making becomes compensatory. This second stage involves the ‘analytic processing of surviving alternatives’ and thereby ‘corresponds to rational choice theory’, although poliheuristic theory at its core remains agnostic about which type of compensatory mechanism will be used in the second phase: lexicographic or maximizing decision rules might both be used, depending on context.²¹⁵ Likewise, poliheuristic theory does not specify *what* types of heuristics or shortcuts will be used in the first phase; only *that* non-compensatory approaches will be used to whittle down choice.

²¹⁰ Herek, Janis and Huth, "Decision Making During International Crises": 218.

²¹¹ Mintz, *Integrating Cognitive And Rational Theories Of Foreign Policy Decision Making*, 14.

²¹² Alex Mintz, "How Do Leaders Make Decisions?", *Journal Of Conflict Resolution* 48, no. 1 (2004): 3-13.

²¹³ Ibid.

²¹⁴ Ibid.

²¹⁵ Ibid., 4.

The integration of the cognitive and rationalist approach achieved by poliheuristic theory is a major advance in foreign policy decision-making analysis. towards a theory that has both process validity *and* outcome validity. Indeed, poliheuristic theory, which has been applied and tested extensively in the past decades, has a good track record in both.²¹⁶ In a sense, this is not surprising: as Goertz perceptively points out, rationalist theories often argue that utility theorists 'see actors as maximizing their utilities *under constraints*' (my emphasis).²¹⁷ Poliheuristic theory effectively provides a framework for understanding these constraints and explaining how the choice set considered in (more or less) rationalist fashion came about. It thus endogenizes these constraints, making for a stronger, more comprehensive theory.²¹⁸

Moreover, the non-compensatory phase means that it is *not* assumed that policy-makers must reduce all facets of a policy option to *one* dimension, thereby implicitly assuming that policy-makers have one goal. Poliheuristic theory thus allows a conception of foreign policy-makers as having multiple goals and working under multiple constraints.²¹⁹ In rationalist approaches, the researcher must define the 'primary' goal of a policy-maker. In reality, such a primary goal might not be a meaningful concept as policy-makers weigh up various concerns and interests. Compared to purely cognitive approaches, meanwhile, poliheuristic theory, drawing on the sharper insights from rationalist framework in the second phase, is better at explaining policy outcomes.²²⁰

The poliheuristic theory of foreign policy decision-making clarifies not only that there is some rationality and weighing-up of options involved when making decisions; it also specifies that people are capable of spontaneously and automatically reducing an unlimited amount of theoretical options to a more limited set of options that will actually be considered. In this way, poliheuristic theory illuminates how the 'BATNA' and its brother concept of the 'preferred alternative' work in practice. In theory, the preferred alternative could be said to be impossible to develop, for the number of theoretical possibilities are

²¹⁶ Steven B Redd, "The Poliheuristic Theory Of Foreign Policy Decision Making: Experimental Evidence", in *Integrating Cognitive And Rational Theories Of Foreign Policy Decision Making* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 101-126.

²¹⁷ Gary Goertz, "Constraints, Compromises, And Decision Making", *Journal Of Conflict Resolution* 48, no. 1 (2004): 14.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 14-37.

²¹⁹ Alex Mintz, "Applied Decision Analysis: Utilizing Poliheuristic Theory To Explain And Predict Foreign Policy And National Security Decisions", *International Studies Perspectives* 6, no. 1 (2005): 96-97.

²²⁰ Vesna Danilovic, "The Rational-Cognitive Debate And Poliheuristic Theory", in *Integrating Cognitive And Rational Theories Of Foreign Policy Decision Making*, 2003.
Redd, "The Poliheuristic Theory Of Foreign Policy Decision Making: Experimental Evidence."

endless. Unless a way is found to pair these possibilities down to a more limited set of options, the preferred alternative is so demanding that it cannot work in practice. Poliheuristic theory, by contrast, articulates an argument for why BATNAs work in practice (and so can the preferred alternative): humans are capable of passing through a first, non-compensatory phase in decision-making, in which they limit the number of realistic options. Whatever loss occurs in this phase by humans dismissing options that would have been judged more valuable by compensatory metrics, is compensated by the fact that this first stage makes the process workable.

At the same time, as poliheuristic theory also articulates, this does not imply that decision-making is always fast, non-compensatory, and mostly unthinking. On the contrary, once the decision-set is narrowed down to a manageable number of options, people do have the capacity to think through those options in a systematic, analytic way. Rational choice is not dead, just applied more judiciously. Thus, in the process of human decision-making, there is scope for the preferred alternative to be considered, analysed, and used. People are capable, poliheuristic theory strongly suggests, *both* of narrowing down options efficiently and of thinking through a limited range of plausible options analytically. These insights into the foreign policy decision-making process support the notion that the preferred alternative is compatible with *how* humans make decisions (the process validity requirement) *and* with ensuring better outcomes (the outcome validity requirement). In other words, the contribution of poliheuristic theory to the preferred alternative and the BATNA is that poliheuristic theory helps articulate *why* BATNAs work and preferred alternatives are likely to also work.

The contribution of the preferred alternative to the FPA literature on foreign policy decision-making, meanwhile, is that the preferred alternative gives a concrete, implementable suggestion on how foreign policy-making can be improved. It is broad and flexible enough to be applicable to a wide range of situations, yet precise enough to constitute a real advance in the policy-making process. Indeed, as pointed out elsewhere, the use of a preferred alternative might *seem* intuitive once attention is drawn to it; in practice, however, it is not. The empirical chapters will demonstrate how preferred alternative was indeed lacking when Britain made its Iraq policy and how the policy suffered because of that lack. I argue that articulating the concept of the preferred alternative and raising awareness of its benefits is the first step to rectifying the situation. Indeed, if policy-makers were to understand the usefulness of the concept, it would not only be easier for politicians to take the concept into account; it would also give critics of government policy a more precise way of articulating their critiques. Policy-making could only benefit.

6. PREFERRED ALTERNATIVES IN FOREIGN POLICY: OTHER BENEFITS

There is a further element to my proposal to use preferred alternatives in a foreign policy context: I argue that establishing preferred alternatives in foreign policy-making has *further* advantages that were not a part of the original work on BATNAs. *Getting to Yes* did not consider the difficulties of making and executing decisions in groups and organizations and the impact the BATNA might have on such difficulties. I argue that in a foreign policy decision-making context, the preferred alternative *does* have an impact on those elements of policy coordination. More specifically, I argue that establishing a preferred alternative and drawing minimal requirements from this preferred alternative is likely to keep policy more coordinated, defined precisely, and robust.

In the section above, I have already argued why a preferred alternative is the logical way to set minimal requirements (because the judgement of what constitutes good policy depends largely on the alternatives one has). Here, then, I will focus on how these minimal requirements are useful. In short, I argue that they make accidental policy changes less likely; make purposeful manipulation of policy more difficult; and strengthen the execution of the chosen (original) policy. They do so because articulating minimal requirements forces policy-makers to think hard about the trade-offs they are willing to make and their priorities. Making explicit these requirements helps convey decision-makers' priorities and trade-offs to other people – notably the Whitehall departments – involved in the preparation and execution of the policy through the extra information and clarity they provide.

This part of the argument can be read as an argument speaking to the bureaucratic drift literature as well as the principal-agent literature more generally. Both that literature and this dissertation examine the discrepancy between the policy intent of the government and the civil servants' enactment of that policy. In other words, minimal requirements address a problem that could be framed as a principal-agent problem or more specifically a question for the bureaucratic drift literature. However, we have a somewhat different interpretation of the problem and, as a result, of the solution.

Principal-agent problems are complications that arise when an entity (the agent) is entrusted with decisions on behalf of another entity (the principal) and is then able to use this agency to make decisions that diverge from the principal's choices or interests.²²¹ The literature on bureaucratic drift examines 'how – or indeed, whether – elected political officials can

²²¹ Mathew D. McCubbins, Roger G. Noll, and Barry R. Weingast, "Administrative Procedures as Instruments of Political Control," *Journal of Law, Economics & Organization* 3, no. 2 (1987): 243.

reasonably effectively assure that their policy intentions will be carried out'.²²² In other words, it examines how the will and intentions of the principal get twisted or thwarted throughout the execution of their will.

Bureaucratic drift is mostly seen as driven by the bureaucrats in the civil service. In the words of McCubbins, Noll & Weingast:

The fundamental premise of this literature is that bureaucrats have personal preferences which conflict with members of Congress and the president. (...) The choices of agency officials are not subjected to electoral discipline. Consequently, in the absence of effective oversight, they are likely to reflect personal preferences, derived from some combination of private political values, personal career objectives, and, all else equal, an aversion to effort, especially effort that does not serve personal interests.²²³

One of the reasons bureaucrats can actually do this is information asymmetry: 'A consequence of delegating authority to bureaucrats is that they may become more expert about their policy responsibilities than the elected representatives who created their bureau. (...) As in all agency relationships, it may be possible for the agency to take advantage of its private information.'²²⁴ This literature understands that it is impossible for the principal to achieve total control over the agent, for several reasons, but it looks at ways to maximise control while limiting the costs of such control. Since McCubbins, Noll & Weingast's 1987 article, this literature has expanded by not only looking at the way in which civil servants can change policy, but also how other actors – future legislators, lobby groups, stake holders – affect legislation and implementation. How to limit bureaucratic drift through legislative, executive, or judicial oversight has also received widespread attention.²²⁵

This reading of the situation presupposes that the principal has a clear idea of the policy to be implemented. By contrast, I argue that Britain's 2001-2003 Iraq policy was characterized by a lack of clear view of the policy that was to be implemented and prepared for by the relevant government departments. Britain's government and its civil service did *not* have a clear,

²²² Ibid., 243.

²²³ Ibid., 247.

²²⁴ Ibid., 247.

²²⁵ Mathew McCubbins, Thomas Schwartz, "Congressional Oversight Overlooked: Police Patrols versus Fire Alarms", *American Journal of Political Science* 28, no. 1 (1984): 165–179.

Steven Balla, "Administrative Procedures and Political Control of the Bureaucracy", *American Political Science Review* 92, no. 3 (1998): 663–673.

McCubbins, Noll, and Weingast, "Administrative Procedures as Instruments of Political Control", 243–277.

Jonathan Macey, "Organizational Design and Political Control of Administrative Agencies", *Journal of Law, Economics, & Organization* 8, no. 1 (1992): 93–110.

shared idea of the policy to be implemented; the fault lines even ran through Cabinet. For this reason, an approach that construes the gap between intentions and execution as a gap caused by agents knowingly subverting political intentions, is not accurate for understanding the lead-up to the invasion of Iraq. That is not to say, of course, that there was *no* instance of bureaucratic drift in the traditional sense of the word. However, treating Iraq policy as given and explaining the failure to prepare as the result of civil servants' desire *not* to enact that policy misses the point. Instead, we need to find a practical way to limit the scope for intragovernmental miscommunication and obfuscation. Minimal requirements can help with this.

Let us go back to the original dilemma of the civil service enacting what the government wants it to do. Even if the civil service (the agent) does exactly what Cabinet (the principal) wants it to do, the civil service will encounter many moments where decisions are needed and have a degree of freedom. This is true in all circumstances except for the most minor projects; after all, the civil service exists *because* no one Secretary of State would be able to do the work alone. This means that departments must take autonomous decisions under almost all circumstances. However, if the boundaries of what they are meant to do are unclear, there is a greater risk that these autonomous decisions will be for the worse. The departments will lack a metric for knowing how to plan. Their interpretations of and decisions on the policy might well differ from those made in other departments that are working on other aspects of the same policy. As later chapters will show, in the United Kingdom's preparation for the invasion of Iraq, such different interpretations led to severe interdepartmental mismatches.

The last paragraph assumed that agents are (trying to) acting consistently with the policy set out by the principal. Clearly articulated limits to the policy are also useful if the agent is *not* doing so. In other words, clear limits on the policy handed down by the principal will also make bureaucratic drift (of the type discussed in the bureaucratic drift literature) less likely. As McCubbins, Noll and Weingast have argued, politicians are best able to control bureaucratic drift by placing *ex ante* constraints on the decision-making process (rather than try to correct it afterwards).²²⁶ Moreover, bureaucratic drift is facilitated by circumstances of plausible deniability: agents are not so much able to explicitly challenge government

²²⁶ Ibid.

Mathew D. McCubbins, Roger G. Noll, and Barry R. Weingast, "Structure and Process, Politics and Policy: Administrative Arrangements and the Political Control of Agencise," *Virginia Law Review* 75, no. 2 (1989): 431–82.

decisions as to look for wriggle room. If no-one knows where the boundaries are, how can anyone notice or flag up when they are crossed?

Lastly, reconsider the problem of information asymmetry. Typically, the idea of information asymmetry refers to the agents' capacity to subvert the principal's will. Even when it is acknowledged that an asymmetrical information advantage exists on both sides, this is presented as a strategic advantage on both sides – in other words, information asymmetry is seen as an opportunity for other side to gain more power. However, information asymmetry can also have a more benign face: when principal and agent would want to communicate relevant information, but do not know *what* information is relevant and ought to be conveyed as a matter of priority. This kind of information symmetry is still a problem; it can be made better by clearly conveying the preferred alternative and the minimal requirements of the policy to those meant to realise that policy.

Every policy plan made by a government department will have built into it assumptions about the circumstances under which the policy will be executed. These limit the range of circumstances for which the policy is suitable. If circumstances subsequently change, the plans might or might not still be usable. This means that the limits to a certain policy – and the circumstances under which that policy will (not) be abandoned – are crucial information to those preparing the concrete plans to realise that policy. Conversely, if the civil service departments know that the limitations inherent in their plans do not match the limits on the policy envisaged by the Cabinet (for example for practical reasons of which the politicians might not be aware), they must warn the Cabinet. They must know *when* to warn the Cabinet. Such necessary communication depends on clarity about both the policy pursued and the limits to that policy.

In summary, explicitly articulated, shared understandings on those limits lessen the civil service's scope of autonomous interpretation. This makes interdepartmental differences of interpretation less likely, and their consequences less severe where they still occur. It is also likely to reduce bureaucratic drift in the traditional sense of the word, whereby actors respond to incentives other than their principal's wishes, again because their space to do so is more explicitly constrained. Moreover, this explicit guidance can help civil service departments understand what limitations their plans can and should have (or avoid). It also allows them to better know when and which intrinsic limitations of the planning and the plans to convey to Cabinet – namely, those that clash with the limits the principal had originally envisaged. Overall, well thought-out and communicated minimal requirements are likely to make for better communication between those setting policy and those preparing

for it. This is an additional benefit of the use of preferred alternatives and related minimal requirements not yet analysed by Ury and Fisher.

7. PRACTICAL USE OF THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE IN FOREIGN POLICY-MAKING

How would preferred alternatives and their corresponding minimal requirements function in practice if they were to be used in making foreign policy? They would have roles that are quite similar (and complementary) to policy goals and strategy. Few policy-makers doubt that to make good policy, one needs to have a goal and a strategy. The argument of this dissertation is that to improve foreign policy-making, preferred alternatives and the derived minimal requirements should be added to goal and strategy to form a more complete policy position. Knowing what you want is meaningless without knowing how much you want it (and whether you can get it). Knowing that you are willing to walk away under certain circumstances is of limited use if you have no idea where you would walk *to*, and no clear grasp of what circumstances *ought* to make you leave.

Just like a government ought to have a clearly defined policy goal, it ought to have a clearly defined preferred alternative. Just like with policy goals, it is not enough for the government to discuss potential preferred alternatives: a common policy position must be agreed upon. After all, a preferred alternative is not meant to function merely as a thinking exercise or a brainstorming session: it is a continuous benchmark to evaluate policy. It clearly delineates the policy position within which departments must prepare for the agreed-on policy. Like policy goals and strategy, the preferred alternative can change over time because of changing preferences, changing circumstances or new information becoming available. Of course, one's preferred alternative need not always be disclosed during negotiations, although it can sometimes be useful to do so. Just like with policy goals, the full advantages will only happen if the preferred alternative is clearly defined, with transitive preferences, and shared across government.

It needs to be stressed that the preferred alternative is not put forward here as a benefit *per se*. Rather, the argument is that the use of a preferred alternative makes internally coherent, appropriate (rationally connecting ends and means) and well-developed plans *more likely*. This is the aim that the preferred alternative is meant to achieve. The argument is thus not tautological. Indeed, I also do not claim that the use of a preferred alternative will automatically and inevitably lead to well-developed, suitable, coherent plans. Nor do I consider it impossible that such good plans can be developed without the use of a preferred alternative. Clearly, governments manage quite regularly to make good plans for a policy

even when that policy has been determined without reference to a preferred alternative. Nonetheless, for more complicated issues, such as many foreign policy issues, it is difficult to develop such good plans – and the use of a preferred alternative is one practical way to define more precisely, narrowly and efficiently under what conditions a certain policy is worth pursuing. On these conditions will depend the preparation, which in turn will impact the possibilities policy-makers have.

In other words, the independent variable is whether a preferred alternative is used when choosing a policy; the dependent variable is whether the plans to execute that policy are coherent, appropriate, and well-developed. The causal relationship between them is neither that one will automatically lead to the other, nor is it that one cannot occur without the other. Rather, the use of a preferred alternative makes it more *likely* that the plans for that policy are coherent, appropriate, and well-developed. Coherent, appropriate, and well-developed plans in turn have a *propensity* to bring about good results. This, again, is not inevitable; and vice versa, good results can sometimes happen *despite* bad preparation. For this reason, the *outcome* in any particular foreign policy episode is a very flawed metric to evaluate the quality of the planning and preparation. Wars can be won on a fluke or lost despite the best possible campaign. For this reason, this dissertation does *not* judge British preparation for Iraq by the metric of victory or failure on the ground.

That a preferred alternative must be shared across the government and civil service preparing policy does not imply that everyone must *like* it. Most of the time, though, everyone involved has the professional duty to follow and carry out the policy decided upon by the Cabinet. In this, the preferred alternative is no different from a policy goal or any other aspect of a full policy position. However, because this dissertation analyses the case of Iraq, in which many doubts have been raised about the good intentions and/or honesty about several of the key players involved – from Tony Blair to Jack Straw to Clare Short – let us also consider the use of a preferred alternative in circumstances in which not everyone demonstrates ‘good faith’, as well as the circumstances in which everyone is trying to follow the government’s full policy position (including goal, strategy, preferred alternative and minimal requirements). Either way, policy-making is better with a preferred alternative than without.

When everyone is of good will, a preferred alternative and corresponding minimal requirements are still useful because of most of the reasons mentioned earlier in this chapter. Determining a preferred alternative is the best way to establish sensible, minimal requirements. Without these clear boundaries, government departments are left to themselves to interpret policy, which heightens the risk for misunderstandings or

inconsistent preparation across departments. This is true even if departments do not search to abuse the discretion they have. When departments are unaware of the limits of the policy to be followed, knowing what information to communicate up the chain becomes more difficult, which may well lead to decision-makers not having all the relevant information to shape their decisions. During negotiation aspects of making foreign policy, the preferred alternative will allow governments to communicate much more clearly to those negotiating on their behalf what room they have for making concessions or demanding more. Back at home, too, it will make it easier for anyone arguing either for or against a certain policy to rationalise why a certain road should be followed. It improves the standards of decision-making, analysis, and debate.

No system can account for all the problems that will arise when someone is purposefully trying to subvert the system. There are no fail-safe systems against deception by a minister or passive resistance from a Whitehall department. However, even in those circumstances preferred alternatives have their use and are better than *not* having a preferred alternative. For one, an unequivocal articulation of all aspects of the policy position makes it much harder to plead ignorance. There will be fewer plausible excuses to derail or skew policy, both vis-à-vis other and vis-à-vis oneself (in a case of wishful thinking). It also makes it easier to spot and point out any problems, and people will have much stronger grounds on which to object: the control mechanism is both easier and stronger. Lastly, even if all else fails and the policy still ends up hijacked by someone refusing to fall in line, it will be much easier to attribute blame later. Articulated preferred alternatives take away plausible deniability. For all these reasons, even in the worst-case scenario of outright ill will against any policy, a defined preferred alternative is far preferable to not having one.

Although the usefulness of determining clear policy goals and a suitable strategy is clear as a concept, in practice neither is very easy. Yet the very fact that the concepts exist helps policy-makers focus on them and think through the complications and implications of both goal and strategy. This is trivially true; a large literature, both academic and from practitioners, discusses both policy goals and policy strategies. Preferred alternatives and the corresponding minimal requirements should be used in a similar fashion: not because governments are likely to use them in a perfect way, but because an awareness of the concepts and their usefulness and importance makes it easier to make better policy. To this end, preferred alternatives and corresponding minimal requirements can be as important as goals and strategy.

8. BRITISH IRAQ POLICY FROM 2001 TO 2003

In the period between 2001 and 2003, when London was setting out and pursuing a new Iraq policy, the government was pursuing one relatively clear policy: pursue Saddam Hussein's disarmament through the Security Council, if necessary (and it probably would be necessary) with force.²²⁷ However, there was no explicit preferred alternative if this policy were to fail. Neither was there an implicit preferred alternative: on the contrary, underlying British policy were two different – mutually exclusive – ideas of what the preferred alternative would look like. One preferred alternative, assumed by Tony Blair, was disarmament with force (if necessary) without the Security Council. The Prime Minister's way of pursuing Iraq policy reflected this stance. For most of Whitehall, and certainly for the Foreign Office and the Department for International Development, as I show, the preferred alternative was following the Security Council without disarming Saddam Hussein (by 'preferred' I do not mean to convey that this was their *own* preference, rather that they presumed this would be the plan-B preferred by decision-makers). Their planning was based on this reading of the preferred alternative.

Two related but distinct problems in Britain's Iraq policy resulted from not having a clear preferred alternative. The first problem was that London was badly prepared for the invasion, in the sense of having plans that were underdeveloped, mutually contradictory and based on unsuitable assumptions. The plans were unsuitable for the invasion as it happened because they were meant for use in different circumstances. Certain assumptions were built into the plans, and these assumptions built on a particular understanding of plan B: namely, that plan B, the preferred alternative, was to *not* go to war but stick with the Security Council as long as there was no international support for the invasion. In this scenario, international support can be presumed, in both option A and option B, and consequently it can be built into the plans as a reasonable assumption. As it turned out, the British government proved willing to go to war without Security Council support (even though it claimed legality for its actions) and plans that had a built-in presumption of international support became unworkable.

In the same vein, Whitehall's plans were mutually contradictory because different departments had different interpretations of the preferred alternative and corresponding minimal requirements of government policy. The assumptions made in one department – about the situation in Iraq as well as about the various government departments' role in the invasion and post-invasion phase – were different from, and incompatible with, assumptions and plans in another department. Finally, there are arguably many reasons why the plans

²²⁷ Whether or not the Security Council would achieve disarmament with or without force is not a matter of preferred alternatives, as this is not in the hands of the United Kingdom. Preferred alternatives concern only what *you* would do given your options.

were insufficient – not least the enormity of the task and the limited time available – but here once more, the long period of uncertainty about the exact nature of the policy to be followed (which includes knowing the limits of that policy) worsened an all-ready-difficult task.

The second curiosity, and problem, in British Iraq policy is that *despite being aware of those problems* (albeit perhaps not of their full extent), the British government went ahead and decided to invade. This puzzling decision is explained well by the dynamics described by Ury and Fisher: without a best (in my words: preferred) alternative, people are likely to become overly pessimistic about alternative policy options.²²⁸ Often, this is even justified, because through lack of preparation they have effectively closed off alternative routes for themselves. When they subsequently find themselves in a vacuum with no clear next step, they are likely to press ahead with whatever is closest to the plan they hoped to be able to fulfil, even when doing so no longer is the best option – or even a good option.

The following four chapters develop this argument based on original research, mostly using sources made available via the Iraq Inquiry. Chapter I has already demonstrated that Blair's views on foreign policy were rather different from those generally held across government departments. It is this difference in views that explains how later, two different implicit preferred alternatives developed. Chapter III traces the decision to go to war. It shows that the United Kingdom's capital, not developing its preferred alternative, effectively negotiated itself into a corner. The following chapter IV charts Whitehall departments' preparation for war – which, for most departments, was implicitly based on a *different* preferred alternative from that which guided London's eventual decision to go to war. As Chapter V then demonstrates, the result was policy plans not suited for the policy decision that was taken. The last chapter draws together these empirical observations and analyses how the failure to have a preferred alternative explains the curious aspects of British Iraq policy between 2001 and 2003.

9. METHODOLOGY

The three empirical chapters are (overwhelmingly) based on primary material made available through the Iraq Inquiry; in this section I briefly describe how I approached the material. During the period in which the majority of gathering and analysing of data took place, mostly the academic years 2013-2014 and 2014-2015, the report of the Inquiry had not yet been published. However, the transcripts of the interviews were available on the website; I compiled them into one document (for ease of work). This transcript document ran

²²⁸ Fisher, Ury, and Patton, *Getting To Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In*, 103.

to just over 12,000 pages. I also gathered, chronologically, the contemporary documents made available through the Iraq inquiry. To these were added key documents that had been leaked, as well as the results of approximately fifteen Freedom of Information Requests (not all successful). Although these documents together consisted of less than 400 pages, these would later form the backbone of my story (being more reliable, in many ways, than oral testimony given much later). Other supporting documents I collated were a detailed timeline and an aggregation of polls (excluding non-scientific polls; 516 polling questions in total, from a variety of polling organisations).

I started reading this material without a precise research hypothesis in mind, simply aiming to understand how the invasion had unfolded. This first cursory reading of all documents led me to focus on the preparation and more specifically the gap between the decision that were made and those that were implemented. I reread the most relevant material more closely, annotating. This second, more targeting reading used the contemporary written notes as its backbone, despite the pages of oral testimony being many more. These key documents, written in preparation for the conflict, would be likely to be a more accurate reflection of what happened than those memories recalled, for a purpose, in front of an inquiry, almost a decade later. Overall, though, I was struck not by discrepancies but by the coherence of the story that emerged.

This is not to say, of course, that the story that emerged was coherent across witnesses and departments – on the contrary, and this dissertation is testimony to that. However, despite these clear cleavages of opinion and interpretation, there were few contradictions on the practicalities of what had occurred; and when such contradictions occurred, the multitude of voices usually allowed us to establish with relative certainty what had happened. An example of a clear difference of opinion is between Tony Blair and Clare Short: although they have different views on what Iraq preparation should have looked like, for example, they (and third speakers) agree, directly or indirectly, that discussions in Cabinet were limited, focused on details, and of little substance. An example of contradictions that can nonetheless be hashed out are Sally Keeble's statements that Clare Short forbade DFID from timely engagement with external partners; many other (often better-placed) sources confirm this was, in fact, a Cabinet ban that Clare Short partly disregarded.²²⁹

The sheer amount of material also allows for triangulation of, certainly not all facts and details, but the facts crucial enough to feature in the dissertation. For example, when I write

²²⁹ Adam Ingram, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 16 July 2010," 2010, 13.
Chakrabarti, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 49.

about the meeting Tim Cross had in December 2002 in DFID, I do not have to take his word for it: Suma Chakrabarti and Nicola Bremer likewise confirm this meeting.²³⁰ While the interpretation of evidence remains a judgement call, some general guidelines proved useful in my handling of the material: contemporary documents are more solid sources than witness testimonies a decade later; assume people know (much) more about their own area of expertise and are more likely to misinterpret the actions of people further outside their realm of expertise or culture (which partly explains the distrust of motives between some of the military and some staff members of FDFID); people are more likely to justify themselves or close confidantes than people they know less well; they will explain and justify themselves according to their own values and their own views on what should have happened. In addition, I do not attribute to malice that which can be plausibly explained by other causes.

The second reading of the documents on preparation led to the general argument underlying this dissertation. Thus, having identified the topics of most interest, I went through the pertinent materials a third time (again with the documentary trail as the backbone), making copious (separate) notes by subject. As the source materials was collated into only two documents of respectively 12,000 and 380 pages, this was straightforward. Thus, when a subject refaced with a different witness, I would go back to this topic in my notes and add the new sources and information. This allowed for a genuine triangulation and combining of the information. The notes for the first empirical chapter were approximately 81 pages long; those for the second empirical chapter were 51 pages; those for the third chapter, on assumptions in the policy-making process (based more on analysis and less on new facts), were 14 pages long. This shortening reflects partly that these notes built on each other and partly a more efficient notation style as time went on.

The empirical chapters were drafted based on these notes and the primary materials. With some exceptions for details that give depth but do not fundamentally change the arguments, all events and interpretations were triangulated, either between documentary evidence and witness testimonies or between witnesses (usually those not known to be close and not known to have common interests). To avoid misquoting individuals and the spirit of what they meant to convey, an extra benchmark was used: except for details, their views would have needed to be repeated on at least two occasions (including during the same witness testimony) to be taken as a correct expression of their views.

10. CONCLUSION

²³⁰ Brewer, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry", 1.
Chakrabarti, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 16.

This chapter has introduced the theoretical argument that underpins this dissertation. The argument is that governments, when making foreign policy, should define their preferred alternative to the chosen course and corresponding minimal requirements as well as their policy goal and strategy. They must do so because (a) governments need a clear idea of the circumstances under which they ought to abandon their charted policy course and (b) considering the preferred alternative is the best way of determining what those minimal requirements should be. This argument is a variation and elaboration on an argument originally put forward by collaborators of the Harvard Negotiation Project in the early 1980s.

Ury and Fisher's original argument, written for negotiations, was that people should consider their 'best alternative to [the] negotiated agreement' (BATNA) while negotiating. This, they argued, is the standard by which people should decide whether to accept the deal under negotiation or whether to walk away. They argued that a BATNA – as compared to more commonly used bottom lines – leads to better outcomes. I argue that their insights can be modified and expanded to be applicable to governments making foreign policy, and indeed that in this context, the preferred alternative can have benefits beyond those discussed by Ury and Fisher. Consciously considering and articulating a 'preferred alternative' to the policy that is pursued helps governments internally. As the preferred alternative allows governments to also articulate their minimal requirements, these minimal requirements can be a crucial tool in coordinating and streamlining policy across the government and the civil service.

In large organizations, a defined preferred alternative to the policy pursued makes it easier to understand and convey to all involved the limits of the policy and the priorities that underlie it. It thus can mitigate the risk of accidental policy drift or simply policy plans that, because they are based on undefined assumptions, vary so much from department to department as to be incompatible. Preferred alternatives also make it easier for civil servants to discern which details are most likely to matter to their political masters, improving bottom-up communication of the most relevant technical aspects and of limitations built into the plans conceived to implement the policy. Finally, even in a government of ill will, preferred alternatives are likely to improve policy because they take away plausible deniability of ill will: because a preferred alternative must now explicitly be defined, fissures in policy are easier to spot and easier to critique.

Preferred alternatives are particularly useful because they give a practical, implementable guideline on how to manage the uncertainty involved in foreign policy-making. They fit into the existing FPA literature on foreign policy decision-making. More precisely, poliheuristic

theory is the strand within FPA that offers the best academic ‘home’ for the preferred alternative, for poliheuristic theory has good process validity as well as good outcome validity. Both are necessary for the preferred alternative: as a practical tool to improve foreign policy decision-making, preferred alternatives need to be compatible with *how* foreign policy is being made. One of the issues hereby is that the preferred alternative cannot be so unwieldy as to be practically impossible. However, poliheuristic theory shows that people are capable of quickly reducing large amounts of theoretical possibilities to a manageable choice set, thus articulating how preferred alternatives are feasible in practice. With regards to *outcome* validity and the preferred alternative’s capacity for improving policy-making, poliheuristic theory also articulates that people *are* capable of analysing a limited choice set to make rational decisions. This allows us to conclude that preferred alternatives should be able to impact decision-making in a rationalist way in the second stage of the process. This dissertation’s contribution to that literature is a practical way to *improve* decision-making.

The last three sections of the chapter are more practical. The first consists of practical guidelines for the use of the preferred alternative and minimal requirements in practice. The third discusses my methodology during my primary research of the chapters that are to follow. The second outlines how this chapter’s argument will be used through the rest of the dissertation to examine British preparation for the war in Iraq. The following chapters use the case of British Iraq policy to examine practical policy-making without a defined preferred alternative. Chapter III focuses on the decision for war. Building on Chapter I’s understanding of the wide gap between Iraq policy as usual and Tony Blair’s inclinations, it narrates the difficult decision to go to war and the circumstances in which it was made. It shows that the British government backed itself into a corner – committed to an invasion to disarm, but without the reassurance and preparation it had wanted to have justifiable confidence in such an invasion – and decided to support an American invasion under circumstances it would have previously deemed unacceptable.

Chapter IV shows how the Ministry of Defence, the Department for International Development, the Foreign Office, and the Cabinet Office prepared Iraq policy. It tracks the planning, the plans and the assumptions that underlay those plans. Chapter V shows the clash between the political decisions of Chapter III and the practical preparations of Chapter IV and the failure to have a coherent policy. Chapter VI, finally, brings together the thesis by highlighting the mechanisms theoretically outlaid here and demonstrated in the empirical chapters. Its key point is this: the British government’s failure to articulate a preferred alternative to the Iraq policy it was pursuing, harmed British Iraq policy in two ways. It

harmed Britain in its negotiations with the United States and the United Nations, inducing it to accept an outcome that was not acceptable by the United Kingdom's own standards. It also harmed the country's preparation for the scenario it had now chosen to enact, making London curiously ill-prepared for this invasion of its own choosing.

Chapter III: Deciding on War

1. INTRODUCTION

This is the first of three chapters based on primary research of testimonies and documents made available (for the most part) through the Iraq Inquiry (www.iraqinquiry.org.uk). Together, these chapters describe how the British government decided to go to war, prepared for the war, and found themselves on Iraqi soil with plans that hardly matched the circumstances. This chapter is about the political process by which London – the Prime Minister, his advisors, Cabinet, the Attorney General, and Parliament – decided on the invasion. It demonstrates how after a period of ambiguity and a failure to achieve the initial policy goal of disarmament through the Security Council, Tony Blair's preferred alternative prevailed: invasion alongside the United States despite the Security Council's unhappiness.

This chapter consists of three parts. The first section 'From 9/11 to Crawford', described the evolution from an Iraq policy of containment, established in the nineties after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, to the commitment that prime minister Blair made at Crawford after 9/11, in April 2002. It describes how the failure of containment led the British towards smart sanctions before the terrorist attacks of 2001 kicked everything into a higher gear. At that point, the Prime Minister's eagerness to stand by the United States as a matter of principle, even before it is clear what its exact policy intentions are, becomes of essence. Tony Blair promises the American president he will stand by him to 'deal' with Saddam Hussein.

The translation of that commitment to policy, however, is less straightforward. As detailed in the second section, 'From commitment to policy', for the rest of the policy-makers – advisors, the Foreign Secretary, civil servants drafting actual policy – policy continues much more along the usual lines: Iraq can only be dealt with through the Security Council and Britain can and will only support the United States under particular conditions. The resulting policy is a hybrid: *de facto* Britain ends up pursuing disarmament through the Security Council. A preferred alternative to this difficult negotiation with the United States and the Security Council is never developed, nor are there coherent minimal requirements across the government for the Iraq policy.

The policy has some success – the American president goes back to the United Nations in September 2002 rather than decide on immediate unilateral action – but ultimately fails. It becomes clear that the Security Council will not agree to military intervention in a time frame and with a burden of proof on Baghdad that the United States is willing to accept. Washington is unwilling to wait any longer, and the policy of disarmament through the Security Council

becomes a dead end. At this point, there is no obvious policy alternative: the preferred alternative has never been developed. The Prime Minister's preferred alternative at this point is disarmament without the Security Council (cloaked, on a dubious technicality, as disarmament 'with' the Security Council's 'permission' which equals 'support'); most other policy makers and civil servants involved had assumed that the alternative was staying on the Security Council road instead of invading Iraq with the United States. Yet because the limits of the initial policy were never clearly defined, and because no alternative has been developed, the Prime Minister's alternative provides most continuity, and the policy of going to war with only (dubious) technical permission of the Security Council is chosen.

The last section, the 'Endgame', discusses those who had to approve (or only ended up approving) policy after it was formed: Attorney General, Cabinet, and Parliament. This dissertation is not a dissertation by an international lawyer or on international law. Analysing the merit of legal arguments would be outside the remits of this project. However, we can observe that for most of the period leading up to the invasion of Iraq, the Attorney General favoured one legal interpretation. At the last minute, he came to prefer another. This section examines the reasons the Attorney General gave for switching from one legal rationale to another and finds them highly dubious. Circumstantial evidence further indicates that the Attorney General was under many kinds of pressures from the government. Either way, the Attorney General approved of the war contingent on a political judgment that war was necessary. Cabinet was then told war was legal (without understanding that this was contingent on a political judgment) and voted in favour. It seems that Cabinet resigned itself to the war in order not to fracture a successful Labour government. Parliament had technically no role to play but also voted in favour of war.

2. FROM 9/11 TO CRAWFORD

British Iraq policy in the nineties

The Iraq policy that Britain maintained throughout the nineties had its roots in Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990.²³¹ The Security Council reacted within a day with Resolution 660, 'condemn[ing] the Iraq invasion of Kuwait' and 'demand[ing] that Iraq withdraw immediately and unconditionally all its forces to the positions in which they were located on 1 August 1990' before the attack.²³² This resolution was followed by Resolution

²³¹ Rongxing Guo, *Territorial Disputes and Conflict Management* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012), 40-41.

Also see John Kampfner, *Blair's Wars* (London: Free Press, 2003), 19.

²³² Ibid.

661, subjecting Iraq to a near-total trade and financial embargo; Resolution 665, authorizing a naval blockade to enforce these embargoes; and Resolution 678.²³³ The latter demanded Iraq withdraw from Kuwait by 15 January 1991, giving other states ‘all necessary means’ to force the Iraqi forces out after that date.²³⁴ Thirteen years later, SCR 678 will be crucial in justifying a full-scale invasion of Iraq.

Though Iraqi troops are withdrawn from Kuwait by February 1991, attention is now drawn to the State of Iraq and in April 1991, the Security Council passes SCR 687.²³⁵ This resolution draws attention to ‘[Iraq’s] prior use of chemical weapons’ as well as ‘reports ... that Iraq has attempted to acquire materials for a nuclear-weapons programme’.²³⁶ It thus moves away from the more narrow issue of the invasion of Kuwait to Iraq’s general international obligations, and asks Iraq to ‘unconditionally accept the destruction, removal, or rendering harmless, under international supervision’ of all its chemical and biological weapons and related stock and facilities, as well as of its ballistic missiles with a range greater than 150 kilometres.²³⁷ This resolution will become crucial a decade later, because of the ‘revival argument’: the argument that the Security Council can take action against Iraq if it violates its obligations as set out in SCR 687 on the basis of SCR 678 (which allows for ‘all necessary

²³³ UN Security Council, “Security Council Resolution 661,” S/RES/661 § (1990).

UN Security Council, “Security Council Resolution 665,” S/RES/665 § (1990).

The best-known resolutions are S/RES/678 and S/RES/687, but the Security Council also passed S/RES/660, S/RES/661, S/RES/662, S/RES/664, S/RES/665, S/RES/666, S/RES/667, S/RES/669, S/RES/670, S/RES/674, S/RES/677, S/RES/686, S/RES/688, S/RES/689, S/RES/692, S/RES/699, S/RES/700, S/RES/705, S/RES/706, S/RES/707, S/RES/712, S/RES/715 etc. They can be consulted on www.unscr.com.

²³⁴ UN Security Council, “Security Council Resolution 678,” S/RES/678, 1990.

The only countries voting against the resolution were Cuba and Yemen. The United States promptly cancelled over \$70 million in foreign aid to Yemen to punish it for its insolence. It is a telling example of the kind of pressure that major nations are willing to use to get smaller countries on the Security Council to vote the right way. The United States would similarly – albeit with less success – put pressure on smaller Security Council nations in 2002.

Thomas L. Friedman, “How U.S. Won Support to Use Mideast Forces The Iraq Resolution: A U.S.-Soviet Collaboration -- A Special Report,” *The New York Times*, December 2, 1990, <http://www.nytimes.com/1990/12/02/world/mideast-tensions-us-won-support-use-mideast-forces-iraq-resolution-us-soviet.html?src=pm&pagewanted=1>.

²³⁵ UN Security Council, “Security Council Resolution 687,” S/RES/687, 1991.

David L. Phillips, *Losing Iraq: Inside the Postwar Reconstruction Fiasco* (New York: Basic Books, 2009), 23.

UN Security Council, “Security Council Resolution 687,” S/RES/687, 1991.

²³⁶ Ibid.

²³⁷ Ibid.

means' to guarantee peace and security in the region).²³⁸ This was the British legal basis for its invasion of March 2003.²³⁹

British Iraq policy after the invasion of Kuwait was a regime of containment built on two pillars: sanctions, including trade and financial embargoes and weapons inspections, and deterrence in the form of no-fly zones.²⁴⁰ The goal of the sanctions was to thwart 'Saddam Hussein's ambitions to redevelop weapons of mass destruction but also containment of the threat which Iraq pos[es] to the region'.²⁴¹ The goal of the no-fly zone was at least two-fold: set up initially and officially as a necessary condition for the 'humanitarian relief efforts' called for in Security Council Resolution 688, the zones are also useful in containing Baghdad and gaining information about the military state and plans of Hussein's regime.²⁴²

In late 1997, the situation between Iraq and the Security Council and the Western countries enforcing a no-fly zone deteriorates; United States Congress passes the Iraq Liberation Act and Iraq stops communicating with the UN weapon inspectors altogether.²⁴³ The situation escalates to Operation DESERT FOX, a four-night-long bombing campaign by American and British forces throughout Iraq from 17 to 20 December 1998 to weaken Iraq's weapon capacities.²⁴⁴ The Security Council passes Resolution 1284 to replace UNSCOM with the United Nations Monitoring Verification and Inspection Committee (UNMOVIC).²⁴⁵ Hereafter, British policy still aims to contain Iraq, but inspectors are no longer allowed into Iraq.

In this new and worsened context, Britain adds a third pillar to its policy of sanctions and deterrence: that of incentives. The incentives can be found in Security Council Resolution

²³⁸ David Brummell, "Iraq: Legal Basis for Use of Force - Note of Discussion with Attorney General," *Attorney General's Office*, March 13, 2003.

²³⁹ Ibid.

²⁴⁰ Simon Webb et al., "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 24 November 2009," 2009, 9-18.

William Shawcross, *Allies: The US, Britain, Europe, and the War in Iraq* (London: Atlantic, 2003), 23.

²⁴¹ Ibid., 12-13.

²⁴² Ministry of Defence, "Background Paper Submitted to the Iraq Inquiry: 'Iraq: No Fly Zones,'" November 6, 2009, 2.

Tom McKane, "February Letter to John Sawers: 'Iraq,'" *Cabinet Office*, February 15, 2001.

Webb et al., "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 24 November 2009", 152-153.

UN Security Council, "Security Council Resolution 688," *S/RES/688*, 1991.

Webb et al., "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 24 November 2009", 64.

²⁴³ Congress (105th), "Iraq Liberation Act," *H.R. 4655*, 1998, <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/105/hr4655>.

Foreign and Commonwealth Office, "Background Paper Submitted to the Iraq Inquiry: 'UN Security Council Resolutions on Iraq, 1990-2001,'" 3.

Ministry of Defence, "Background Paper Submitted to the Iraq Inquiry: 'Iraq: No Fly Zones,'" 4.

²⁴⁴ Ibid., 5.

²⁴⁵ UN Security Council, "Security Council Resolution 1284," *S/RES/1284*, 1999.

1284: it promises the suspension of sanctions 120 days after Iraq has accepted the return of weapons inspectors.²⁴⁶ In other words, the ultimate British policy goal vis-à-vis Iraq remains the same: containment. Initially both sanctions and inspections helped achieve that goal, but now that Iraq has banned weapon inspections, Britain is willing to give up sanctions to improve inspections.²⁴⁷ In addition to 'incentives' to reverse the interdiction of weapons inspectors, the embargoes and no-fly zones also remain.

The Early 2000s: A Failing Policy of Containment

By the beginning of the new millennium, however, the policy of containment is seen to be 'failing and the rate of failure [is] accelerating'.²⁴⁸ All three strands of the British policy – deterrence, sanctions, and incentives – have problems.²⁴⁹ Deterrence in the form of the no-fly zones is risky and the British press – like the international press – is critical.²⁵⁰ There are growing legal concerns about the no-fly zones (as they depended on their humanitarian necessity), as well as growing concerns about the risks pilots are running as Iraq is improving its air defence capabilities.²⁵¹ Equally, there is confusion about the proper response if an Allied aircraft were shot down.²⁵² The zones are also unpopular, with France openly opposing them and many countries feeling they have lost their necessity.²⁵³

Meanwhile, the sanctions are leaking. Many neighbouring countries have a more immediate interest in doing business with Baghdad than in keeping the sanctions tight.²⁵⁴ A new pipeline through Syria worsens the smuggling of oil. The oil-for-food programme is misused, and the continued suffering of the Iraqi people means growing opposition against the sanctions

²⁴⁶ Iraq responds by saying that "the real purpose of America and Britain behind this resolution is not to lift the embargo, but to deceive the world public opinion".

"Iraq: Iraq Rejects United Nations Security Council Move Toward Ending Sanctions Stalemate."

UN Security Council, "Security Council Resolution 1284."

²⁴⁷ Webb et al., "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 24 November 2009", 31-32.

²⁴⁸ Ibid., 13.

²⁴⁹ Ibid., 13.

²⁵⁰ For an academic critique, see Eric Herring, "Between Iraq and a Hard Place: A Critique of the British Government's Case of UN Economic Sanctions," *Review of International Studies* 28 (2002): 39-56.

McKane, "February Letter to John Sawers: 'Iraq.'"

Geoffrey Hoon, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 19 January 2010," 2010, 6-8.

²⁵¹ Alan Goulty, "Letter to Tom McKane: 'Iraq,'" *Foreign and Commonwealth Office*, October 20, 2000.

Tony Blair, "Doctrine of the International Community," *Chicago Economic Club*, April 22, 1999, <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/international-jan-june99-blair-doctrine4-23/>.

David Brummell, "Letter to Tom McKane: 'Iraq: No Fly Zones (NFZs),' " *Attorney General's Office*, February 12, 2001.

McKane, "February Letter to John Sawers: 'Iraq.'"

John Sawers, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 10 December 2009," 2009, 9.

²⁵² Webb et al., "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 24 November 2009", 148.

²⁵³ Hoon, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 19 January 2010", 6-8, 10.

²⁵⁴ Webb et al., "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 24 November 2009", 13-14.

regime as a whole.²⁵⁵ Jutta Burghardt, the head of the United Nations World Food Programme, resigns in protest, as do Denis Halliday, the United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator in Iraq, and his successor Hans von Sponeck.²⁵⁶ As for the third strand, Saddam Hussein clearly prefers less and less effective sanctions over the incentives offered.²⁵⁷ This means that incentives fail to have an important effect: the incentives strand never gets off the ground and Iraq is as closed as ever.²⁵⁸

Thus, in October 2000, the Middle East and North Africa Department of the Foreign & Commonwealth Office was reviewing its Iraq policy of containment as spelled out in the 1999 paper 'Iraq: Future'.²⁵⁹ The conclusion from this review was that the United Kingdom should move to 'smart sanctions': narrower better targeted sanctions. Other options, including regime change, were briefly discussed but summarily dismissed.²⁶⁰ In targeting sanctions more narrowly, fewer aspects of Iraqi life would be under international control. This would address the humanitarian concerns for the suffering of ordinary Iraqi people caught up in the restrictions of the sanctions and quell international opposition to the sanctions.²⁶¹ Better targeting restrictions, meanwhile, on weapons and military materials, would up the pressure on Saddam Hussein and stop leaks in the existing sanctions regime.²⁶² From mid-2001 onwards the United Kingdom submitted a series of draft resolutions in the Security Council, which were repeatedly opposed by Russia, while the incoming US administration mostly focused on domestic issues.²⁶³

²⁵⁵ McKane, "February Letter to John Sawers: 'Iraq.'"

Webb et al., "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 24 November 2009", 13-14.

²⁵⁶ Barbara Plett, "Iraq: Second UN Official Resigns," *BBC News*, February 15, 2000, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/644057.stm.

²⁵⁷ This had been indicated by Iraq immediately after the adoption of S/RES/1284 which contained the incentives for lifting the sanctions. Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Aziz had said at the time that "the resolution (in essence and format) is a re-writing of resolution 687 in a tendentious and illegal manner. (...) Iraq will not get any benefit from any suspension in addition to the abusive restriction it imposes on Iraq's economy and resources. Regardless of the speculations and threats resulting from this position, Iraq holds to its principled and legal position, and it is ready to face all results in defence of its sovereignty and legitimate rights."

"Iraq: Iraq Rejects United Nations Security Council Move Toward Ending Sanctions Stalemate."

Webb et al., "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 24 November 2009", 14.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 14.

Gouly, "Letter to Tom McKane: 'Iraq.'"

McKane, "February Letter to John Sawers: 'Iraq.'"

²⁵⁹ Gouly, "Letter to Tom McKane: 'Iraq.'"

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁶¹ McKane, "February Letter to John Sawers: 'Iraq.'"

Sawers, "Letter to Sherard Cowper-Coles: 'Iraq: New Policy Framework.'"

²⁶² McKane, "February Letter to John Sawers: 'Iraq.'"

Sawers, "Letter to Sherard Cowper-Coles: 'Iraq: New Policy Framework.'"

²⁶³ McKane, "April Letter to John Sawers: 'Iraq.'"

This policy of 'smart sanctions' was not only conceived to reassure countries worried about the impact of harsh sanctions on Iraq; it was a balance struck to also deal with the incoming Bush administration, which was likely to have tougher views than Britain and indeed most other countries.²⁶⁴ Indeed, the Republicans had systematically criticized the Clinton administration for not being tough enough on Baghdad: the Bush team had already stressed publicly that it wanted 'to see sanctions on Iraq tightened, not loosened'.²⁶⁵ Part of the British plan thus was to dissuade the new Bush administration from taking a tough stance on Iraq from which it would be difficult to back down.²⁶⁶ Moreover, Britain also wanted to avoid being in a position where it looked like *it* was backing down.²⁶⁷ It considered withdrawing from the Southern No Fly Zone but would only do so seemingly in response to a positive action by Saddam Hussein and did not consider giving up sanctions *before* Baghdad let inspectors back in.²⁶⁸

The Cabinet Office briefing prepared for the Prime Minister's meeting with President Bush in February 2001 also made a case for including regime change as part of the British policy (it had been official American policy since Clinton).²⁶⁹ This was meant as a symbolic stance to show that Britain is not happy to 'simply assum[e] an indefinite stalemate' and to 'hold out to the Iraqi people the prospect of a brighter future post-Saddam'.²⁷⁰ This would perhaps have encouraged those Iraqi people to overthrow Hussein, although in reality, both the Foreign

Webb et al., "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 24 November 2009", 13-15, 30-31.

Greenstock, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 27 November 2009", 9-10, 12-13.

Jack Straw, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 21 January 2010," 2010, 4.

Sawers, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 10 December 2009", 5.

Meyer, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 26 November 2009", 16-17.

²⁶⁴ Ibid.

²⁶⁵ Ibid.

Examples of where presidential candidate Bush said this in public:

Jim Lehrer, Al Gore, and George W. Bush, "The Second Gore-Bush Presidential Debate," *Commission on Presidential Debates*, September 11, 2000, <http://www.debates.org/index.php?page=october-11-2000-debate-transcript>.

Arms Control Association, "Presidential Election Forum: The Candidates on Arms Control," *Arms Control Today*, September 1, 2000, https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2000_09/pressept00.

Later this showed again:

Barbara Crossette, "US-British Plan Seeks to Restore," *New York Times*, May 17, 2001, <https://www.globalpolicy.org/component/content/article/170/42313.html>.

²⁶⁶ Goulty, "Letter to Tom McKane: 'Iraq.'"

Crossette, "US-British Plan Seeks to Restore."

²⁶⁷ Goulty, "Letter to Tom McKane: 'Iraq.'"

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

²⁶⁹ Ibid.

²⁷⁰ Ibid.

Although that never went anywhere, also see the 'contract with the Iraqi people' in annex B of the following document:

McDonald, "Letter: 'Iraq: Options.'"

Secretary and the Cabinet Office judged, the likelihood of this was slim.²⁷¹ The paper judged that it was best to continue with the No-Fly Zones.²⁷² Stopping them and flying in only in response to a move from Baghdad would be riskier, and abolishing them while maintaining the goal of defending Kuwait would mean replacing them with a much more expensive ground force.²⁷³

'Iraq: New Policy Framework' was a confidential document that outlined what the British proposal for Smart Sanctions might look like in detail.²⁷⁴ It was sent around internally as well as to the British diplomatic posts in New York and Washington on 7 March 2001.²⁷⁵ One month later, an update on that policy indicated that the United States and Britain 'appear[ed] to be in agreement on the broad directions', in particular 'on the case for moving towards a single list of goods subject to UN controls', which would make the sanctions narrower.²⁷⁶ However, there was no agreement yet on whether to reduce the No-Fly Zones; it was also clear that the United States agreed with Britain in broad lines more in order to 'be in a position to set out our ideas to the French and the Russians' than because they agreed in detail.²⁷⁷ It is also worth noting that the American Department that Her Majesty's Government was dealing with at this stage was that of Colin Powell, who throughout took a 'softer', more multilateral approach to the Iraq issue than many of his colleagues.²⁷⁸

At this stage, many countries were weary of negotiating a new resolution outlining (more precise but stricter) sanctions on Iraq, particularly as the new consensus that Britain was looking for would still include that 'pending [a change in Baghdad's behaviour and lack of cooperation], military measures ... would have to be at least tolerated'.²⁷⁹ Discussions happened in the Security Council over the next months, but even by 18 September 2001, 'French support overall was tepid' and Russia still had objections.²⁸⁰ There was a natural

²⁷¹ Ibid.

Goulty, "Letter to Tom McKane: 'Iraq.'"

Sedwill, "Letter to John Sawers: 'Iraq: Policy Review.'"

"Letter from Richard Dearlove's Private Secretary to Sir David Manning: Iraq."

"Iraq: Options Paper," *Overseas and Defence Secretariat (Cabinet Office)*, March 8, 2002, <http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB328/II-Doc01.pdf>.

²⁷² McKane, "February Letter to John Sawers: 'Iraq.'"

²⁷³ Ibid.

²⁷⁴ Sawers, "Letter to Sherard Cowper-Coles: 'Iraq: New Policy Framework.'"

²⁷⁵ Ibid.

²⁷⁶ McKane, "April Letter to John Sawers: 'Iraq.'"

²⁷⁷ Ibid.

²⁷⁸ Meyer, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 26 November 2009", 24, 26, 35.

²⁷⁹ Sawers, "Letter to Sherard Cowper-Coles: 'Iraq: New Policy Framework.'"

Tom McKane, "Letter to David Manning: 'Iraq Stocktake,'" *Cabinet Office*, September 18, 2001.

Greenstock, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 27 November 2009", 3-6.

²⁸⁰ McKane, "Letter to David Manning: 'Iraq Stocktake.'"

timeline for discussions about Iraq in all this: existing Oil for Food provisions only covered the period until November 2001.²⁸¹ A straight continuation of these provisions would be 'a defeat for the US Administration, strengthening the hands of the hawks' (as it would mean Saddam Hussein was comfortable with the current status-quo, which was not severe enough on his regime).²⁸² By contrast, for those who opposed sanctions, it would be a 'continuation of a policy to penalise ordinary Iraqis'.²⁸³

If the draft resolution on smarter sanctions backed by the United Kingdom could be passed, that would be good: but the risk of failure was high, particularly if Iraq's neighbours were not convinced it was in their interest to stop trading with Iraq and stop smuggling oil.²⁸⁴ A revised draft resolution, without the proposals 'to tighten existing controls and the references to neighbouring states', might be easier to obtain but would be weaker and thus disliked by the American administration.²⁸⁵ Nonetheless, the British government judged in 18 September 2001, this solution might be the most likely to pass and would also help form 'the broad coalition which the US were seeking in their war against terrorism'.²⁸⁶ (Note that this language on a war against terrorism already comes up one week after the terrorist attacks on the Twin Towers.) This third, revised option is indeed what was passed in May 2002.²⁸⁷ Smarter sanctions were now in place, but without strict border controls.²⁸⁸ Of course, by this time and in the aftermath of 9/11, the new solution was quickly becoming obsolete as the British and American heads of state had become convinced that even this improved threat-containment was no longer good enough.²⁸⁹

From 9/11 to Crawford: A commitment is made

²⁸¹ Webb et al., "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 24 November 2009", 31-32.

²⁸² McKane, "Letter to David Manning: 'Iraq Stocktake.'"

²⁸³ Ibid.

²⁸⁴ Ibid.

Kafala, "How Smart Are Smart Sanctions?"

Reuters, "UN Council Powers Discuss Easing."

Greenstock, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 27 November 2009", 4-13.

McKane, "April Letter to John Sawers: 'Iraq.'"

²⁸⁵ McKane, "Letter to David Manning: 'Iraq Stocktake.'"

²⁸⁶ Ibid.

²⁸⁷ UN Security Council, "Security Council Resolution 1409," *S/RES/1409*, 2002.

²⁸⁸ Ibid.

Blair, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 29 January 2010", 15, 18.

²⁸⁹ Ibid., 15-18, 20.

Blair, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 21 January 2011", 29.

9/11 provoked a worldwide outpouring of sympathy and support for the United States.²⁹⁰ Of course Britain, one of the countries closest to the United States, was no exception. Christopher Meyer – the British ambassador to Washington – and Condoleezza Rice spoke on the phone on the day itself: she immediately confirmed that it was without doubt an Al-Qaeda attack but mentioned that the Administration was looking into a possible connection with Iraq.²⁹¹ On 14 September 2001, Blair also called Bush to express his condolences and support: Bush mentioned the same possibility to Tony Blair.²⁹² However, this remote possibility was discarded almost immediately: British Intelligence Assessment Staff reported on 18 September 2001 that there was no reason to assume a link.²⁹³ This has long since become the standard interpretation.

Nonetheless, noises about Iraq started coming out of the traumatized States in the weeks and months that followed.²⁹⁴ Some of them explicitly – and wrongly – linked Saddam Hussein and the attacks.²⁹⁵ Unsurprisingly, a sizeable minority of Americans – a majority according to some polls – assumed there was a link between Iraq and the terrorist attacks.²⁹⁶ Members of the administration, including Vice-President Dick Cheney, certainly suggested there was a link.²⁹⁷ Not all calls for action on Iraq alluded to a connection with 9/11 *per se*, though: the 7 December 2001 congressional letter to President Bush urging action on Iraq, for instance, is based on a lower tolerance for risk in *general*. It argued that ‘the events of September 11 have highlighted the vulnerability of the United States to determined terrorists. As we work to clean up Afghanistan and destroy al Qaeda, it is imperative that we plan to eliminate the

²⁹⁰ “World Shock over U.S. Attacks.”

“After the Attack; Reaction From Around the World.”

“Reaction From Around the World.”

For a few exceptions to the outpour of support see:

Hall, Goldenberg, and Hooper, “Palestinian Joy - Global Condemnation.”

²⁹¹ Meyer, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 26 November 2009”, 20.

²⁹² Manning, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 30 November 2009”, 7.

²⁹³ McKane, “Letter to David Manning: ‘Iraq Stocktake.’”

²⁹⁴ John McCain et al., “Letter Urging Action in Iraq,” December 7, 2001, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/nation/specials/attacked/transcripts/iraqletter_120701.html.

Meyer, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 26 November 2009”, 61-62.

Manning, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 30 November 2009”, 6-9.

“The Plain Truth.”

Zeller, “The Nation; How Americans Link Iraq and Sept. 11.”

Bush, “President Bush Outlines Iraqi Threat: Remarks by the President on Iraq.”

Russert, “Interview with Dick Cheney.”

²⁹⁵ “The Plain Truth.”

²⁹⁶ Zeller, “The Nation; How Americans Link Iraq and Sept. 11.”

²⁹⁷ “The Plain Truth.”

Bush, “President Bush Outlines Iraqi Threat: Remarks by the President on Iraq.”

Russert, “Interview with Dick Cheney.”

threat from Iraq' 'by beginning immediately to assist the Iraqi opposition on the ground inside Iraq by providing them money and assistance'.²⁹⁸

Reaction by politicians and close policy-advisors

It is still hard to know exactly what Tony Blair's reaction was in his interactions with the American President. Important relevant documents remain classified.²⁹⁹ Nonetheless, those documents that *are* available – the (leaked) March 2002 Options Paper, the 14 March 2002 letter from David Manning in Washington to Tony Blair, the 17 March 2002 letter from Blair to his chief of staff, Meyer's 18 March 2002 briefing of his conversation with American Deputy Secretary of Defense Wolfowitz, the 25 March 2002 warning from Jack Straw to Tony Blair – clearly indicate that Tony Blair had given support for (some form of) regime change and that those representing him on other occasions confirmed this stance in their conversations with American officials.³⁰⁰ Of course, Blair himself confirmed this in his testimony to the Inquiry: he testified that immediately after 9/11, he offered the United States his support and the promise that he would stand by them on Iraq, because not doing anything was no longer an option.³⁰¹ The kind of threat posed by Saddam Hussein was a threat to everyone and could no longer be tolerated.³⁰² In this interconnected world, it was 'our' duty and interest to act.³⁰³

²⁹⁸ McCain et al., "Letter Urging Action in Iraq."

²⁹⁹ The negotiations between the Iraq Inquiry Secretariat and the British government on the release of the conversations between Prime Minister Blair and president Bush took several years. They ended with an agreement in which the Iraq Inquiry committee would be allowed to publish concise extracts where this was necessary and in any case without revealing the position of president Bush (to safeguard other countries' trust that their privileged communication with British leaders will, as a matter of principle, remain confidential).

Gus O'Donnell, "Letter to John Chilcot: 'Declassification,'" *Cabinet Office*, December 22, 2010.

John Chilcot, "Letter to Gus O'Donnell: 'Declassification,'" *Iraq Inquiry Secretariat*, December 10, 2010.

John Chilcot, "Letter to Gus O'Donnell: 'Declassification,'" *Iraq Inquiry Secretariat*, December 22, 2010.

John Chilcot, "Letter to Gus O'Donnell: 'Declassification,'" *Iraq Inquiry Secretariat*, January 6, 2011.

John Chilcot, "Letter to Jeremy Heywood," *Iraq Inquiry Secretariat*, May 28, 2014.

John Chilcot, "Letter to the Prime Minister: 'Iraq Inquiry: Progress,'" *Iraq Inquiry Secretariat*, January 20, 2015.

Gus O'Donnell, "Letter to John Chilcot," *Cabinet Office*, January 11, 2011.

³⁰⁰ "Iraq: Options Paper."

Manning, "Letter to the Prime Minister: 'Your Trip to the US.'"

Tony Blair, "Letter to Jonathan Powell: 'Iraq,'" *Office of the Prime Minister*, March 17, 2002.

Christopher Meyer, "Iraq and Afghanistan: Conversation with Wolfowitz," *British Embassy in Washington*, March 18, 2002.

Straw, "Letter to the Prime Minister: 'Crawford/Iraq.'"

³⁰¹ Blair, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 29 January 2010", 10-11, 24, 28, 34-35, 42-43, 48.

Blair, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 21 January 2011", 9, 43, 47-48.

³⁰² Blair, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 29 January 2010", 7, 11.

³⁰³ *Ibid.*, 23, 26-27, 47.

On 14 March 2002, David Manning informed Tony Blair that he had told Rice ‘that you [Blair] would not budge in your support for regime change ... [and] you would not budge either in your insistence that, if we pursued regime change, it must be very carefully done and produce the right result. Failure was not an option’.³⁰⁴ Three days later, Christopher Meyer also confirmed to Wolfowitz that the United Kingdom ‘backed regime change, but the plan had to be clever and failure was not an option’.³⁰⁵ The Ministry of Defence by now has also got the message: ‘[on] Iraq, we should support President Bush and be ready for a military contribution’.³⁰⁶ The Foreign Secretary also implicitly acknowledged the intention of being with the United States, for military action if necessary, when he discussed the domestic political risks of doing so on 25 March, as did MI5.³⁰⁷

The secret ‘Iraq: Options Paper’ of 8 March 2003 was the first (publicly known) policy document that sets out a reasoning for supporting regime change through a full-scale ground campaign (as opposed to only fomenting rebellion in Iraq or give air support to opposition groups).³⁰⁸ It said that while containment had been partially successful, it had not removed Saddam Hussein who probably continued to develop weapons of mass destruction.³⁰⁹ Britain’s goal should be the reintegration of a law-abiding Iraq into the international community, which could not happen with Saddam Hussein in power.³¹⁰ Even tougher containment would probably not topple the dictator.³¹¹ When it came to regime change, simply supporting the divided internal Iraqi opposition might not be enough to topple Saddam.³¹² Even the second option, an air campaign providing support to opposition groups, would have no guarantee of success.³¹³ In particular, this idea was discarded because ‘there is no guarantee that another Sunni autocrat would be better’ and London was ‘not aware of any Karzai figure able to command respect inside and outside Iraq’.³¹⁴

The third option, a military invasion, would raise difficulties – especially in making and maintaining a coalition – but ‘the greater investment of Western forces, the greater our

³⁰⁴ Manning, “Letter to the Prime Minister: ‘Your Trip to the US.’”

³⁰⁵ Meyer, “Iraq and Afghanistan: Conversation with Wolfowitz.”

³⁰⁶ Geoffrey Hoon, “Letter to the Prime Minister: ‘Iraq,’” *Ministry of Defence*, March 22, 2002.

³⁰⁷ Straw, “Letter to the Prime Minister: ‘Crawford/Iraq.’”

Elizabeth Manningham-Buller, “Letter to John Gieve: ‘Iraq: Possible Terrorist Response to a US Attack,’” *Security Service*, March 22, 2002.

³⁰⁸ “Iraq: Options Paper.”

³⁰⁹ Ibid.

³¹⁰ Ibid.

³¹¹ Ibid.

³¹² Ibid.

³¹³ Ibid.

³¹⁴ Ibid.

control over Iraq's future'.³¹⁵ The paper then concluded that 'despite the considerable difficulties, the use of overriding force in a ground campaign is the only option that we can be confident will remove Saddam and bring Iraq back into the international community'.³¹⁶ This is bizarre, because it does not discuss *how* one would get from military action to finding an end-state – despite the lack of clearly defined end-state with corresponding strategy being the reason the other two options got rejected.³¹⁷ The paper also noted that regime change 'has no basis in international law', and would need to pass through the Security Council one way or another.³¹⁸ Jonathan Powell perhaps spotted that problem, because on 17 March he told Tony Blair that '[in] all my papers, I do not have a proper worked-out strategy on how we would do it'.³¹⁹ The question, of course, was not only 'how' they would do 'it'. The first question should be what 'it' precisely is.

Reaction in the departments that prepare policy

During the same period between December 2001 and April 2002, policy departments in London also started taking into account the idea that the United States might be heading 'for direct action'.³²⁰ A letter from the Secret Intelligence Service to David Manning of 3 December 2001 outlined the stakes in such action.³²¹ It contained a long litany of risks associated with American attacks on Iraq: among many others, it cited 'increased distrust of [American and British] motives throughout the Islamic world', 'increase in radical Islamist extremism' and heightened risk of terrorism, 'renewed splits' in the Security Council, 'major political/diplomatic disturbance', the risk of an attack on Israel, no good envisaged end-state for Iraq beyond Saddam and the risk of bolstering him internally.³²² Another part of the document outlined how difficult it would be to gain support from various international institutions and states.³²³ The concern of the British government and Jack Straw was to find ways to divert the United States 'to an alternative course'.³²⁴

³¹⁵ Ibid.

³¹⁶ Ibid.

³¹⁷ Ibid.

³¹⁸ Ibid.

³¹⁹ Blair, "Letter to Jonathan Powell: 'Iraq.'"

³²⁰ "Letter from Richard Dearlove's Private Secretary to Sir David Manning: Iraq."

Ibid.

Simon McDonald, "Letter to Richard Dearlove's Private Secretary: 'Iraq,'" *Foreign and Commonwealth Office*, December 5, 2001.

³²¹ McDonald, "Letter: 'Iraq: Options.'"

³²² Ibid.

³²³ Ibid.

³²⁴ "Letter from Richard Dearlove's Private Secretary to Sir David Manning: Iraq."

One way of doing this that was considered was to encourage regime change in Baghdad by providing 'air support to coup makers' on quite short notice ('to meet US impatience'), although the first point on that letter (of 3 December 2001) noted that there is a serious problem of legality with that idea.³²⁵ A Foreign and Commonwealth Office document of the same day similarly dismissed both the attractiveness and legality of regime change.³²⁶ It also pointed out that 'a new [Security Council Resolution] would almost certainly be needed' 'to construct a (threadbare) legal case for military action' and that a 'strategy to deal with the WMD threat will require ratcheting up our present policy of containment'.³²⁷

A further document (of 27 February 2002) on the 2002 State of the Union Speech of the American president and his comments on 'an axis of evil' re-emphasized the need to encourage 'a broad-based approach', but also suggested that London should not 'rule out UK participation ... if that is the only way ... and a worthwhile and legal option exists at the time'.³²⁸ Nonetheless, this Ministry of Defence paper further noted that, while the American concerns are 'valid' (albeit 'stated excessively starkly'), it was hard to see any 'satisfactory end-states which should be the objective of military operations'.³²⁹ The policy stance this paper recommended, which is in line with what the Foreign Office was saying, was to acknowledge the concerns of Washington while advocating different solutions.³³⁰

Crawford

When Tony Blair and George W. Bush met in Crawford in April 2002, he had given a commitment to regime change already, yet the policy recommended and planned by Whitehall was one of guiding Washington away from the war path. These slightly different tacks could be and were – for the time being at least – more or less squared by Tony Blair committing in principle to regime change if it became absolutely inevitable, while also pushing hard to convince the Americans to take the United Nations route. In other words, the British government ended up in a policy of pursuing disarmament through the Security Council as a practical means to be able to support the United States. If that route worked optimally, it might be possible to disarm Saddam Hussein without force. Even if Baghdad did

³²⁵ Ibid.

³²⁶ McDonald, "Letter: 'Iraq: Options.'"

³²⁷ Ibid.

³²⁸ Webb, "Note: 'Axis of Evil.'"

³²⁹ Ibid.

³³⁰ Ibid.

McDonald, "Letter: 'Iraq: Options.'"

"Letter from Richard Dearlove's Private Secretary to Sir David Manning: Iraq."

not give in, however, the Security Council could well provide the legal justification for regime change based on disarmament.

An extract from an FCO diplomatic telegram of 10 April 2002 shows that this is indeed what happened: the Prime Minister and the President had agreed that 'Iraq's WMD programmes were a major threat to the international community, particularly when coupled with Saddam's proven track record on using these weapons. Letting that programme continue unhindered was not an option. The Prime Minister and President Bush agreed that action in the UN was the priority.'³³¹ The last two sentences perfectly sum up the tension and compromise: Tony Blair agreed that *something* had to be done. As a Ministry of Defence document put it: 'To achieve a successful regime change, the UK would need to be actively involved (one might also argue that the Prime Minister has effectively committed us)'.³³² President Bush had seemed to agree that that something should preferably be the United Nations.

3. FROM COMMITMENT TO POLICY

A commitment with strings attached

In April 2002, then, the Prime Minister had made a commitment to see Iraq through. Of course, the British government and the Prime Minister himself later denied accusations that Britain had committed to war at Crawford.³³³ It can be argued that technically, that defence is correct. There was no decision to go to war yet as such: the commitment was not so much for regime change through force *per se*.³³⁴ It was about doing something about Iraq, with high hopes that that something could be disarmament through the Security Council.³³⁵ However, it was also a commitment that implicitly meant a commitment to 'no longer tolerate the threat of Iraq' even if that peaceful route would not work.³³⁶

One of the crucial questions then is whether this commitment was unconditional. Yes, said Blair: even though we were giving them advice about the smart way to do it (the UN route and a coalition), at the end of the day alliances were not made by friends throwing conditions

³³¹ "Diplomatic Cable: 'The Prime Minister's Meeting with President Bush, 5-7 April.'"

³³² Simon Webb, "Note: 'Bush and the War on Terrorism,'" *Ministry of Defence*, April 12, 2002.

³³³ Blair, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 29 January 2010", 43, 45.

³³⁴ *Ibid.*, 45.

Blair, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 21 January 2011", 50.

³³⁵ *Ibid.*, 9, 47-48.

Blair, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 29 January 2010", 42, 48, 56.

³³⁶ *Ibid.*, 49.

Blair, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 21 January 2011", 34-35.

at each other.³³⁷ This went back, of course, to the fact that for Blair the first right thing was to do *something* about Saddam Hussein.³³⁸ The second right thing was to do so through the United Nations, to strengthen that institution and to promote the internationalist project, and also to help the United States gain more allies.³³⁹ But even if this second element failed, for instance because members of the Security Council were incapable of recognising the important and right thing to do, the risk coming out of Baghdad could not be tolerated any longer.³⁴⁰ Of course any commitment given at Crawford was not unconditional, maintains Jack Straw: if nothing else, that would have been completely impossible for legal reasons to honour this kind of promise.³⁴¹ It was also totally out of line with official British policy, which was the disarmament of Iraq through the United Nations.³⁴²

The 'conditions' were the following: the UN route needed to be exhausted; there needed to be progress in the Middle East Peace Process (what that entailed was rather unclear); and the public (both domestically and in the Middle East) needed to be clearly informed and ideally convinced so as to make any force politically viable.³⁴³ After Crawford if not before, these did in fact become conditions in the policy pursued by the Foreign Office.³⁴⁴ Nonetheless, it is also clear that the message received from London by the embassies was still rather mixed: although Meyer was aware of the British line and the existence of these conditions, he only saw them formally listed in a Cabinet Note of July 2002 (that was leaked).³⁴⁵ He has also said that it was never quite clear to him just how iron these conditions actually were meant to be.³⁴⁶ Even though Manning and Straw insisted they were binding indeed, the United States did seem less than impressed and little inclined to follow them, with the exception of the

³³⁷ Blair, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 29 January 2010", 46, 51-52.

³³⁸ Blair, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 21 January 2011", 6-7, 43.

Blair, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 29 January 2010", 7, 11, 28, 49, 52, 90.

³³⁹ Ibid., 40, 71-72.

Blair, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 21 January 2011", 48.

³⁴⁰ Blair, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 29 January 2010", 90.

Blair, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 21 January 2011", 7.

Powell, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 18 January 2010", 137.

³⁴¹ Straw, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 21 January 2010", 37-38.

³⁴² Ibid., 38-39.

³⁴³ Meyer, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 26 November 2009", 63-64.

Edward Chaplin, "Note: 'Iraq: Military Action,'" *Foreign and Commonwealth Office*, July 12, 2002.

Jack Straw, "Letter to the Prime Minister: 'Iraq: Contingency Planning,'" *Foreign and Commonwealth Office*, July 8, 2002.

³⁴⁴ Ibid.

Chaplin, "Note: 'Iraq: Military Action.'"

Jonathan Powell, "Letter to the Prime Minister: 'Iraq,'" *Office of the Prime Minister*, July 19, 2002.

Meyer, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 26 November 2009", *39, 63.

³⁴⁵ Ibid., 64.

³⁴⁶ Ibid., 64.

United Nations route, to which it eventually agreed.³⁴⁷ Nothing much ever came of the other conditions.³⁴⁸

Of course, while the Middle East Peace Process and the public opinion campaign were desirable for political reasons and to improve the chances of success of the operation, the Security Council route was crucially important for legal reasons. There is absolutely no doubt that it would have been illegal for Britain to participate in military action had the United Nations route not been taken ('exhausting the UN route', as Blair put it, also would not *in se* have been enough to make war legal).³⁴⁹ Nonetheless, the legal issue seemed to be a non-issue for many policy-makers involved, and both the legal advisors of the Foreign Office and the Attorney General regularly had to intervene to emphasize the limits to what could be done.³⁵⁰ The United Nations route was a condition whether the Prime Minister agreed with that or not: it is highly unlikely that the Foreign Secretary, the Defence Secretary, the Armed Forces, Cabinet, the Attorney General, Parliament, the Civil Service and the country would

³⁴⁷ Ibid., 65-66.

³⁴⁸ Ibid., 65-66.

³⁴⁹ Peter Goldsmith, "Letter to the Prime Minister: 'Iraq,'" *Attorney General's Office*, July 30, 2002.

Peter Goldsmith, "Letter to Geoffrey Hoon," *Attorney General's Office*, March 28, 2002.

Michael Wood, "Note: 'Iraq,'" *Foreign and Commonwealth Office*, March 26, 2002.

Straw, "Letter to the Prime Minister: 'Crawford/Iraq.'"

John Grainger, "Letter: 'Iraq, Regime Change,'" *Foreign and Commonwealth Office*, March 21, 2002.

Brummell, "Letter to Tom McKane: 'Iraq: No Fly Zones (NFZs).'"

McDonald, "Letter: 'Iraq: Options.'"

"Iraq: Options Paper."

On 'exhausting' and an 'unreasonable veto' also see:

Michael Wood, "Note: 'Iraq: Legal Position,'" *Foreign and Commonwealth Office*, January 22, 2003.

Michael Wood, "Note: 'Iraq: Legal Basis for Use of Force,'" *Foreign and Commonwealth Office*, January 24, 2003.

³⁵⁰ "Iraq: Options Paper."

Manning, "Letter to the Prime Minister: 'Your Trip to the US.'"

Blair, "Letter to Jonathan Powell: 'Iraq.'"

Meyer, "Iraq and Afghanistan: Conversation with Wolfowitz."

Grainger, "Letter: 'Iraq, Regime Change.'"

Wood, "Note: 'Iraq,'" March 26, 2002.

Goldsmith, "Letter to Geoffrey Hoon."

"Diplomatic Cable: 'The Prime Minister's Meeting with President Bush, 5-7 April.'"

Michael Wood, "Note: 'FAC: Iraq: International Law,'" *Foreign and Commonwealth Office*, October 4, 2002.

Michael Wood, "Note: 'Iraq,'" *Foreign and Commonwealth Office*, October 15, 2002.

Michael Wood, "Note to Edward Chaplin: 'Iraq: Prime Minister's Phone Call With Bush, 14 October,'" *Foreign and Commonwealth Office*, October 17, 2002.

Cathy Adams, "Note: 'Iraq: Record of the Attorney General's Telephone Conversation with the Foreign Secretary, 18 October,'" *Attorney General's Office*, October 21, 2002.

Wood, "Note: 'Iraq: Legal Basis for the Possible Use of Force.'"

Brummell, "Note: 'Iraq: Note of the Telephone Conversation Between the Attorney General and Jonathan Powell - Monday, 11th November 2002.'"

Jack Straw, "Note to Michael Wood: 'Iraq: Legal Basis for Use of Force,'" *Foreign and Commonwealth Office*, January 29, 2003.

Peter Goldsmith, "Letter to the Foreign Secretary," *Attorney General's Office*, February 3, 2003.

have stood for such a flagrant violation of British customary policy respecting international law.³⁵¹

In any case, Britain started preparing for contingent participation in military action with the United States – and had to repeatedly point out that participation was contingent indeed.³⁵² Meanwhile, in September 2002, the American president agreed to go (back) to the Security Council.³⁵³ In the immediate sense, this was a clear victory for both Britain and those within the American Administration who would prefer a multilateral and maybe even peaceful

³⁵¹ An ICM/Daily Mirror pol from 28-29 January 2003 (N=1004) showed that 41% of the British population felt that Britain should only take part in a war against Iraq with a fresh mandate for war from the UN; together with 8% undecided and 9% who felt that war could happen even without a fresh mandate, this means that *with* a fresh mandate the British population would overall (if barely overall) support war; without a new mandate, only 9% agreed.

Wood, "Note: 'Iraq,'" October 15, 2002.

Adams, "Note: 'Iraq: Record of the Attorney General's Telephone Conversation with the Foreign Secretary, 18 October.'"

Matthew Rycroft, "Letter to Simon McDonald: 'Iraq: Legal and Military Aspects,'" *Office of the Prime Minister*, March 11, 2003.

Martin J. Hemming, "Letter to David Brummell: 'Iraq: Position of the CDS,'" *Ministry of Defence*, March 12, 2003.

Straw, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry", 24.

Simon McDonald, "Note to Legal Adviser: 'Iraq,'" *Foreign and Commonwealth Office*, October 15, 2002.

Straw, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 21 January 2010", 106-107.

³⁵² "Letter to Simon Webb," *Foreign and Commonwealth Office*, May 3, 2002.

"Letter to Simon McDonald," *Office of the Prime Minister*, May 18, 2002.

"Note: 'David Manning's Visit to Washington 17 May - Iraq,'" *Ministry of Defence*, May 21, 2002.

A.R.D. Shirreff, "Note: 'David Manning's Visit to Washington 17 May - Iraq' (Answer)," *Ministry of Defence*, May 21, 2002.

Straw, "Letter to the Prime Minister: 'Iraq: Contingency Planning.'"

Peter D. Watkins, "Letter to Matthew Rycroft: 'Iraq,'" *Ministry of Defence*, July 26, 2002.

R.N., "Note: 'CDS Discussion with CJCS General Myers - 3 Jul 02,'" *Ministry of Defence*, July 3, 2002.

Michael Boyce, "Letter to General Richard B. Myers, United States Air Force," *Ministry of Defence*, July 4, 2002.

Peter D. Watkins, "Letter to David Manning: 'Iraq: Military Planning,'" *Ministry of Defence*, September 6, 2002.

M.J. Williams, "Letter to David Manning: 'Iraq: Contingency Actions,'" *Ministry of Defence*, September 12, 2002.

Geoffrey Hoon, "Letter to the Prime Minister: 'Iraq: UK Military Options,'" *Ministry of Defence*, October 15, 2002.

Peter D. Watkins, "Letter to David Manning: 'Iraq: UK Military Options,'" *Ministry of Defence*, October 29, 2002.

Anna Wechsberg, "Letter to Peter Watkins: 'Iraq: Military Options,'" *Office of the Prime Minister*, October 31, 2002.

"Note: 'Briefing to Prime Minister,'" *Ministry of Defence*, January 15, 2003.

Matthew Rycroft, "Letter to Peter Watkins," *Office of the Prime Minister*, January 15, 2003.

Peter D. Watkins, "Note: 'Iraq: Military Planning,'" *Ministry of Defence*, January 16, 2003.

"Note: 'Record of the Meeting Between the Prime Minister and Chiefs of Staff to Discuss OP TELIC: 15 Jan 03,'" *Ministry of Defence*, January 22, 2003.

John Dodds, "Iraq - the Aftermath - Military Options," *Defence, Diplomacy and Intelligence Team (HM Treasury)*, March 4, 2003.

Meyer, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 26 November 2009", 81.

Straw, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 21 January 2010", 53.

³⁵³ Bush, "Speech to the UN General Assembly," September 12, 2002.

solution to an immediate unilateral invasion.³⁵⁴ In a wider sense though, Bush agreeing to go to the Council probably also meant that, *if* this did not work, Britain might now be under more pressure to make good on its promise (with a logic along the lines of ‘we will stand by you, just come to the United Nations first’), even if that meant the use of force.

Negotiations in the Security Council and SCR 1441

In essence, this is what happened: the United States went back to the Security Council; SCR 1441 got passed; inspectors went back into Iraq and reported back to the Security Council; there was major disagreement in the Security Council as to its implications of both SCR 1441 and the reports; further progress in the Council became impossible; military preparation was pressing ahead; and the United Kingdom got desperately stuck between its commitment to the United States and its (legal) position on the Security Council.³⁵⁵ Its legal problem was partly caused by the fact that the Attorney General was not involved in the drafting of the resolution; nor was the legal advice clearly and properly integrated in London’s advice to the UK Mission in New York in the usual way.³⁵⁶ In other words, the policy that it had ended up agreeing on by necessity, namely pursuing disarmament via the Security Council, was under threat: it seemed ever more likely that the United Kingdom would not be able to obtain both disarmament and Security Council support.

Securing one resolution instead of two

³⁵⁴ Meyer, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 26 November 2009”, 24, 35, 38-39, 87-88.

Manning, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 30 November 2009”, 22, 25.

Straw, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 21 January 2010”, 53-54.

³⁵⁵ Bone, “‘Clean’ Iraq Will Admit Weapons Inspectors.”

Preston and Purdum, “U.N. Inspectors Can Return Unconditionally, Iraq Says.”

UN Security Council, “Security Council Resolution 1441.”

Bush, “Speech to the UN General Assembly,” September 23, 2003.

UN Press Office, “United Nations Weapons Inspectors Report to Security Council on Progress in Disarmament of Iraq,” March 7, 2003, <http://www.un.org/press/en/2003/sc7682.doc.htm>.

The briefings of the UNMOVIC weapons inspectors can be found on <http://www.unmovic.org/>.

Watkins, “Note: ‘Iraq: Military Planning.’”

“Note to Chiefs of Staff on UK Participation in Operational Plan (Extract from MO 6/17/15C IRAQ),” *Ministry of Defence*, January 28, 2003.

³⁵⁶ Normally the New York mission gets one set of instructions from the Foreign & Commonwealth Office, in which the legal advice is integrated. The New York legal advisors do not directly confer with their colleagues in London. However, in this case, we know that the instructions sent by Jack Straw – of securing one resolution – were not advised on by the Attorney General (and that the London legal advisors, to the extent that they were involved, were critical about the developments in the draft resolution). This might well explain the discrepancy between the view of the London lawyers – who thought the one draft as it stood was not enough – and that of the New York negotiators – who seemed to think the draft was good enough. They logically would have assumed so if they were following the instructions sent to them by the FCO, which were taken to have incorporated legal advice.

Iain Macleod, “Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry,” June 24, 2010, 2.

The Security Council – China, France, Russia, United Kingdom, United States, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Colombia, Guinea, Ireland, Mexico, Mauritius, Norway, Singapore and Syria – passed SCR 1441 on 8 November 2002.³⁵⁷ Despite its unanimity, their vote hid substantial differences between their positions.³⁵⁸ SCR 1441 and its meaning have become much contested – as the British ambassador to the United Nations said, diplomacy got ‘too clever’ for its own good.³⁵⁹ One notable aspect of this controversy is the claim that SCR 1441 was always meant as the first of two resolutions; and that the failure of the United Kingdom to achieve a second resolution meant that London went to war illegally.³⁶⁰ Regardless of the legal merits of SCR 1441 as it was adopted, though (which will be discussed later), it is clear that the United Kingdom always *intended* the resolution to be self-contained: the Foreign Office wrote that ‘[it] will be important that the draft should provide legal cover for military action without further Council action’.³⁶¹ Moreover, the resolution being self-containing was a *conditio sine qua non* for the United States to accept the final version of SCR 1441, as Washington did not want the Security Council to limit its option of taking unilateral action.³⁶²

Negotiation goals of the countries

Different countries in the Council had different reasons for agreeing to a resolution. The United States wanted to deal with Iraq and did not feel it needed any (new) Security Council permission to do so: it was negotiating on the draft as a political favour to Britain (and to

³⁵⁷ United Nations, “Voting Record for S/RES/1441.”

³⁵⁸ UN Press Office, “Summary of the Security Council Debate on Iraq upon the Adoption of Resolution 1441 (2002),” November 8, 2002, <http://www.staff.city.ac.uk/p.willetts/IRAQ/PRSC7564.HTM>.

“Joint Statement by China, France and Russia Interpreting UN Security Council Resolution 1441 (2002),” November 8, 2002, <http://www.staff.city.ac.uk/p.willetts/IRAQ/FRRSCHST.HTM>.

John D. Negroponte, “United States Explanation of Vote on UN Security Council Resolution 1441 (2002),” November 8, 2002, <http://www.staff.city.ac.uk/p.willetts/IRAQ/US081102.HTM>.

³⁵⁹ Greenstock, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 27 November 2009”, 40.

³⁶⁰ Weisman, “Threats and Responses: Security Council; Powell, in U.N. Speech, Presents Case to Show Iraq Has Not Disarmed.”

Patrick E. Tyler, “Annan Says Iraq War Was ‘Illegal,’” *The New York Times*, September 16, 2004, <http://www.nytimes.com/2004/09/16/international/16CND-NATI.html?fta=y>.

David Brummell, “Note: ‘Iraq: Note of Telephone Conversation Between the Foreign Secretary and the Attorney General on Tuesday, 12 November 2002,’” *Attorney General’s Office*, November 12, 2002.

³⁶¹ Greenstock, “Letter to Michael Jay: ‘Iraq: Handling in the Security Council.’”

Jack Straw, “Letter to the Prime Minister: ‘Iraq: Pursuing the UN Route,’” *Foreign and Commonwealth Office*, September 14, 2002.

Simon McDonald, “Note: ‘Attorney General,’” *Foreign and Commonwealth Office*, September 24, 2002.

Simon McDonald, “Letter to David Manning: ‘Iraq: Ultimatum,’” *Foreign and Commonwealth Office*, August 27, 2002.

Greenstock, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 27 November 2009”, 46-47, 53.

Straw, “Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry”, 7.

³⁶² Cathy Adams, “Note: ‘Iraq: Meeting with David Manning, 14 October,’” *Attorney General’s Office*, October 14, 2002.

parts of its own administration).³⁶³ Its policy goal vis-à-vis Iraq was regime change. This meant that Washington had an interest in making the resolution as difficult as possible for Baghdad to obey.³⁶⁴ By contrast, the United Kingdom was pursuing disarmament. Its goal was therefore a resolution setting disarmament conditions that Saddam Hussein could easily comply with (within the limits of proper disarmament, of course).³⁶⁵ It did not want to set the bar too high.³⁶⁶

France and Russia, on the other side of the political spectrum, did not want an invasion of Iraq.³⁶⁷ They had come to the negotiation table to prevent unilateral action by the United States.³⁶⁸ Their goal was a resolution that was attainable for Iraq and that would not lead to military action; at the very least not without the green light of the Council. Paris was insisting on a two-resolution approach.³⁶⁹ Most of the smaller countries were hesitant about following the American-British axis, under a lot of pressure from Washington to nonetheless support its plans, and unhappy to be dragged into this clash.³⁷⁰

Content and meaning of SCR 1441

The resolution stated that Iraq was still in material breach of its disarmament obligations.³⁷¹ Nonetheless, the country would be given 'a final opportunity to comply', by letting weapons inspectors back in and by submitting a new 'currently accurate, full, and complete' declaration on the state of its weapons programmes.³⁷² SCR 1441 also specified that any further 'false statements or omissions in the declarations (...) and failure (...) to comply' would constitute a further material breach.³⁷³ It further specified that the Security Council shall 'convene immediately' 'to consider the situation and the need for full compliance with

³⁶³ Ibid.

Greenstock, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 27 November 2009", 44.

Meyer, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 26 November 2009", 67-68, 87-88.

Manning, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 30 November 2009." *100-101.

³⁶⁴ Greenstock, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 27 November 2009", 30-32.

³⁶⁵ Straw, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry", 17.

Straw, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 21 January 2010", 97.

³⁶⁶ Straw, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry", 17.

Straw, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 21 January 2010", 97.

³⁶⁷ Greenstock, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 27 November 2009", 12-13, 54-55, 63, 79, 89-90, 92.

³⁶⁸ Ibid., 92.

³⁶⁹ UN Press Office, "Summary of the Security Council Debate on Iraq upon the Adoption of Resolution 1441 (2002)."

"Joint Statement by China, France and Russia Interpreting UN Security Council Resolution 1441 (2002)."

³⁷⁰ Greenstock, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 27 November 2009", 63-64, 71-72, 79.

Prescott, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 30 July 2010", 51.

³⁷¹ UN Security Council, "Security Council Resolution 1441."

³⁷² Ibid.

³⁷³ Ibid.

all of the relevant Council resolutions' and pointed out that Iraq 'will face serious consequences as a result of its continued violations of its obligations'.³⁷⁴

It is clear that Iraq was given at least one more opportunity to avoid action by the Security Council by cooperating properly; there is also no real discussion that a material breach needed to consist of *both* false statements in Baghdad's declarations and non-compliance with the inspections (as opposed to either).³⁷⁵ However, what should happen if there was a further material breach was less clear. Her Majesty's Government has argued that the resolution did *not* say that the Security Council had to make a new *decision* if there was a further material breach to decide on the punishment: it only needed to *consider* the situation again (implying that individual nations might be able to notice a further material breach and mete out the punishment).³⁷⁶ By contrast, the resolution also did not explicitly authorize military action without a further decision by the Security Council – usually the only body that can determine whether any breach constitutes a material breach and what the consequence should be – and many people and countries have felt and argued that SCR 1441 in itself did not authorize military action.³⁷⁷

Inspections and the attempt for a second resolution

After the adoption of SCR 1441, Baghdad did allow inspectors back into Iraq.³⁷⁸ It also submitted a declaration on 7 December 2002, which was mostly recycled from earlier reports and generally judged unhelpful by London and Washington.³⁷⁹ It got severe criticism from the weapon inspectors too: their first report was overall negative about Iraq's

³⁷⁴ Ibid.

³⁷⁵ Ibid.

Jack Straw, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 February 2010," 2010, 32, 79.

Straw, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 February 2011", 87.

³⁷⁶ Brummell, "Iraq: Legal Basis for Use of Force - Note of Discussion with Attorney General."

³⁷⁷ Tyler, "Annan Says Iraq War Was 'Illegal.'"

"Pope Condemns Any War on Iraq," *Cable News Network*, January 13, 2003, <http://edition.cnn.com/2003/WORLD/europe/01/13/sproject.irq.pope/index.html>.

"War Draws Condemnation," *BBC News*, March 20, 2003, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/world/middle_east/2867027.stm.

Helena Smith, "Greeks Accuse Blair of War Crimes in Iraq," *The Guardian*, July 29, 2003, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2003/jul/29/iraq.iraq>.

"Arab States Line Up Behind Iraq," *BBC News*, March 25, 2003.

"Tutu Calls for Trial of Bush and Blair," *The New York Times*, September 2, 2012, http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/03/world/europe/tutu-says-bush-and-blair-should-face-court-over-iraq.html?_r=0.

³⁷⁸ Blix, "An Update on Inspection."

³⁷⁹ Ibid.

UN Press Office, "Le Secrétaire d'Etat Américain, Colin Powell, Présente Des Informations 'Sûres et Fiables' sur Les Tentatives de l'Iraq de Dissimuler Les Armes et Activités Interdites Par La Résolution 1441."

cooperation.³⁸⁰ Some in the American administration argued that this in and of itself gave the green light to war, but that argument did not get any traction.³⁸¹ This gave London less hope of spontaneous disarmament by Baghdad – which had always seemed an unlikely option – but it also meant that the Council might now agree that Baghdad was failing its duties, and thus needed to be dealt with. It made a successful second resolution more likely.³⁸² The Americans agreed to try and get a second resolution, while maintaining that they did not need it to undertake action.³⁸³ However, the process led to nothing but a renewed fracturing of the Security Council on the issue of Iraq.³⁸⁴

Moreover, London was still in trouble over the legal issue: the Attorney General felt at that time that the SCR 1441 on its own provided dubious legal grounds and recommended a second resolution to solve the problem.³⁸⁵ Although Tony Blair, Jack Straw and those in the New York embassy felt that SCR 1441 was certainly self-containing (not that their view had any authoritative value from a British legal perspective), they would have had no choice but to accept the Attorney General's judgement – which in any case was in line with both the Foreign Office's legal advisors' view and that of many states.³⁸⁶ There was an additional value

³⁸⁰ Blix said that while 'the declaration contains a good deal of new material [on missiles and biotechnology]', 'the 12,000-page declaration, most of which is a reprint of earlier documents, does not seem to contain any new evidence that would eliminate the questions' that UNMOVIC has, which 'deserve to be taken seriously by Iraq rather than being brushed aside as evil machinations of UNSCOM'.

Blix, "An Update on Inspection."

³⁸¹ Greenstock, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 27 November 2009", 61-62.

³⁸² Which, Jack Straw says, it why Bush agreed to a second resolution.

Straw, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 21 January 2010", 84, 101.

³⁸³ Straw, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 21 January 2010", 84, 101.

³⁸⁴ Greenstock, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 27 November 2009", 12-13, 55, 63-64, 71-72, 79, 89-90, 92.

John Prescott, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 30 July 2010," 2010, 51.

³⁸⁵ Brummell, "Note: 'Iraq: Note of the Telephone Conversation Between the Attorney General and Jonathan Powell - Monday, 11th November 2002.'"

Brummell, "Note: 'Iraq: Note of Telephone Conversation Between the Foreign Secretary and the Attorney General on Tuesday, 12 November 2002.'"

³⁸⁶ Wood, "Note: 'Iraq: Legal Basis for Use of Force.'"

Wood, "Note: 'Iraq: Legal Position.'"

Peter Goldsmith, "Note: 'Draft - Iraq: Interpretation of Resolution 1441,'" *Attorney General's Office*, January 14, 2003.

Simon McDonald, "Letter to the Attorney General," *Foreign and Commonwealth Office*, February 6, 2003.

David Brummell, "Note: 'Iraq: Note of Meeting at No. 10 Downing Street - 4.00 P.m., 19 December 2002,'" *Attorney General's Office*, December 19, 2002.

Brummell, "Note: 'Iraq: Note of Telephone Conversation Between the Foreign Secretary and the Attorney General on Tuesday, 12 November 2002.'"

Brummell, "Note: 'Iraq: Note of the Telephone Conversation Between the Attorney General and Jonathan Powell - Monday, 11th November 2002.'"

Wood, "Note: 'Iraq: Legal Basis for the Possible Use of Force.'"

to maintaining the initiative in the Security Council, even though a second resolution certainly carried with it the risk of making SCR 1441 seem less self-sufficient if it failed.³⁸⁷

Fail it did. It was clear that the Security Council had no appetite for approving the use of force against Iraq, particularly without any further time for the inspections to work and for Saddam Hussein to be brought to compliance.³⁸⁸ The United Kingdom in particular was lobbying hard – desperately – for a second resolution, but the permanent members were still opposed and the smaller countries reluctant.³⁸⁹ On 10 March 2003, France announced that it would vote against a second resolution authorizing military force ‘in all circumstances’.³⁹⁰ It quickly became clear from diplomatic interaction with Paris as well as from the context that Paris did not mean that it would always on principle oppose dealing with Iraq.³⁹¹ Rather, it would never vote for war as things stood.

Regardless, the explicitness of the French stance meant that it was now much easier for the smaller countries in the Council to not vote with the United States and Britain: why vote for such an unpopular resolution if it would not pass either way?³⁹² While the blame that the British government subsequently and publicly put on the French was misplaced and disingenuous, it had become clear that a second resolution explicitly authorizing force was not about to happen without giving the inspections more time.³⁹³ But the military time table was pressing ahead and the United States did no longer want to wait.³⁹⁴ The Security Council route had run its course.³⁹⁵

³⁸⁷ Brummell, “Note: ‘Iraq: Note of Telephone Conversation Between the Foreign Secretary and the Attorney General on Tuesday, 12 November 2002.’”

Greenstock, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 27 November 2009”, 64-66, 81.

³⁸⁸ Ibid., 12-13, 55, 63-64, 71-72, 79, 89-90, 92.

Prescott, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 30 July 2010”, 51.

³⁸⁹ Ibid., 51.

Straw, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 21 January 2010”, 82-83.

Blair, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 29 January 2010”, 117.

³⁹⁰ Sciolino, “Threats and Responses: Discord; France to Veto Resolution on Iraq War, Chirac Says.”

Poivre D’Arvor, Pujadas, and Chirac, “Interview Télévisée Du Président de La République Sur TF1 et France 2.”

³⁹¹ Ibid.

Matthew Rycroft, “Email to Jonathan Powell et alii: ‘French Veto - Urgent,’” *Office of the Prime Minister*, March 12, 2003.

Jack Straw, “Diplomatic Cable: ‘Iraq: Foreign Secretary’s Conversation with French Foreign Minister, 13 March,’” *Foreign and Commonwealth Office*, March 13, 2003.

John Holmes, “Diplomatic Cable,” *United Kingdom Mission to Paris*, March 13, 2003.

³⁹² Straw, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 21 January 2010”, 83-84, 116.

Greenstock, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 27 November 2009”, 88.

³⁹³ Hoge, “Blaming France, Blair Says Passage of Iraq Resolution Unlikely.”

Straw, “Speech in the House of Commons.”

Greenstock, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 27 November 2009”, 63-64, 71-72.

³⁹⁴ Meyer, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 26 November 2009”, 51-53, 90-92, 96.

When the negotiations fail, what is the preferred alternative?

This is when the tension in British policy really cornered the British government. All along, there had been substantial underlying problems with the British policy, in particular about any alternatives to the pursued policy. Any commitment to the United States to be with them outside the United Nations was quite simply legally – and politically – untenable. Yet all throughout this saga, little attention had been paid to that by those preferring this route. The Foreign Office had been formally clear throughout that regime change itself could not be the basis for any action, and that the UN route was the only route; yet de facto, the office had indeed been working on something that amounted to regime change. The Prime Minister had been clear in his promises to the United States. The effect, though, was that there was no clear alternative.³⁹⁶

By March 2003, London was hopelessly stuck between its commitments to international law, the role of the United Nations, the United States and of course the fact that its military was planned in in the American plan for the invasion. Even though the military contribution of Britain was very significant – one third of fighting troops in Iraq, an entire division, were British – Washington was quite clear that it could fight on its own and that London could withdraw from the coalition if it wanted or needed to.³⁹⁷ This was anathema to Tony Blair. Instead, his attitude of *wenn schon, denn schon* ('if you go for it, you really go for it') meant that he did not back out of the coalition.³⁹⁸ Instead, he wagered all his political capital on the war being legal and on getting permission from Cabinet and Parliament.³⁹⁹

Former Foreign Secretary Robin Cook resigned as Leader of the House of Commons, but the Prime Minister succeeded.⁴⁰⁰ After weeks of doubt, the Attorney General did change his mind in the last week before the invasion and decided that the better view would be, after all, that the war was legal.⁴⁰¹ The Foreign Office's Deputy Legal Adviser resigned in reaction to this.⁴⁰²

Greenstock, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 27 November 2009", 74-76.

³⁹⁵ Straw, "Speech in the House of Commons."

³⁹⁶ Powell, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 18 January 2010", 87-88.

³⁹⁷ Greenstock, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 27 November 2009", 81.

Straw, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 21 January 2010." *104.

Blair, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 29 January 2010", 63.

Blair, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 21 January 2011", 50-51.

³⁹⁸ Blair, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 29 January 2010", 61-63, 133-134.

³⁹⁹ Tony Blair, "The Case for War: Speech to the House of Commons," *House of Commons*, March 18, 2003, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pg9aEV9bcxs>.

⁴⁰⁰ Cook, "Resignation Speech."

⁴⁰¹ Brummell, "Iraq: Legal Basis for Use of Force - Note of Discussion with Attorney General."

⁴⁰² Elizabeth Wilmshurst, "Resignation Letter," *Foreign and Commonwealth Office*, March 18, 2003.

After a political thriller, Cabinet agreed to and Parliament voted in favour of war.⁴⁰³ Thus, with the Security Council route now exhausted and war on the basis of its resolutions legal from a British domestic point of view, Britain went to war on the eve of 20 March 2003.

4. ENDGAME

Attorney General

International opinion on the legality of the invasion and the role of the Attorney General

The story of the Attorney General's involvement in, and perspective of, the development of Iraq policy between September 2001 and March 2003 is regrettably short. A lot has of course been written about the legality of the invasion. Both academics and governments have argued in no unclear terms that the invasion was utterly illegal under international law; many others have been more diplomatic in tone but essentially agree.⁴⁰⁴ The United Nations Secretary General explicitly called the war illegal.⁴⁰⁵ There are various lines of arguments as to why the war were illegal. Some legal opinions do not recognise the 'revival' argument, which is the argument that UNSCR 678 of 1990, which allows states to take measures against Iraq to restore peace in Kuwait and in the region as a whole, could be 'revived' if and when Saddam Hussein were to not comply with all of the demands made on him by the Security Council, including complete disarmament and verification of that disarmament by the United Nations.⁴⁰⁶ Another, related question is not the revival argument in principle but its applicability.⁴⁰⁷

⁴⁰³ "House of Commons Debates: Monday, 17 March 2003."

"House of Commons Debates: Tuesday, 18 March 2003."

⁴⁰⁴ The Dutch government supported the war at the time. Its position, like the British one, was that a second Security Council resolution would be desirable but not necessary. The Dutch Inquiry into Iraq on the other hand called such a stance 'hard to defend':

W.J.M. Davids et al., "Rapport Commissie van Onderzoek Besluitvorming Irak" (Amsterdam, 2010), <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/rapporten/2010/01/12/rapport-commissie-davids>, 427.

"Pope Condemns Any War on Iraq."

"War Draws Condemnation."

Peter Goldsmith, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 27 January 2010," 2010, 238.

Smith, "Greeks Accuse Blair of War Crimes in Iraq."

"Arab States Line Up Behind Iraq."

"Pope Warns Against Iraq War," *BBC News*, December 25, 2002, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/2605367.stm>.

"Tutu Calls for Trial of Bush and Blair."

⁴⁰⁵ Tyler, "Annan Says Iraq War Was 'Illegal.'"

<http://www.nytimes.com/2004/09/16/international/16CND-NATI.html?fta=y>

⁴⁰⁶ See for instance this submission of over twenty legal experts to the Iraq Inquiry:

Dapo Akande, "Submissions to the UK Iraq Inquiry on the Legality of the Iraq War (Updated)," *EJIL*, 2010, <http://www.ejiltalk.org/submissions-to-the-uk-iraq-inquiry-on-the-legality-of-the-iraq-war/>.

Secondly, here are further questions over whether, even if it was provisionally revived in 1441 (that is to say: would have automatically been revived by a further material breach of Saddam Hussein) the United States and the United Kingdom would have been authorized to conclude such a breach on their own, rather than wait for the United Nations to conclude that Saddam Hussein had gone too far and materially breached Resolution 1441.⁴⁰⁸ Lastly, although this has not been cause of so much contention, there is the issue of proportionality and whether a large-scale invasion of Iraq was a justified response to lack of cooperation and clarity about Iraq's weapon programmes.⁴⁰⁹

However, from a domestic legal point of view in the United Kingdom, the person that authoritatively pronounces on the legality of any such matter is the Attorney General. As the Attorney General at the time did judge the invasion of Iraq legal (contingent on the political judgement of the Prime Minister), and the Prime Minister made the judgement that the invasion was necessary because Iraq was in breach and an invasion was necessary to get full compliance with Iraq's disarmament obligations, from a British official point of view the war was legal.⁴¹⁰ This nonetheless leaves open the question of British policy-making and the role that the Attorney General and his legal advice had in this.

Evolution of the Attorney General's view on military intervention in Iraq

March 2003 was not the first time that this British government had had to deal with Iraq. In 1998 the British had participated in Operation Desert Fox, and they also had continued patrolling in the No-Fly Zones together with the United States and initially France. This means that some of the legal questions surrounding action in Iraq on the basis of Baghdad's noncompliance with its UN obligations had previously come up.⁴¹¹ When Peter Goldsmith became Attorney General in June 2001, he confirmed and adopted the stances of his predecessor.⁴¹² He did recognise the principle of a revival argument based on SCR 687; he also judged that the Security Council would need to be the body assessing a material breach

Michael Wood, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 26 January 2010," 2010, 50-51.

⁴⁰⁷ Akande, "Submissions to the UK Iraq Inquiry on the Legality of the Iraq War (Updated)."

⁴⁰⁸ Michael Wood, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry," January 15, 2010, 5.

⁴⁰⁹ Grainger, "Letter: 'Iraq, Regime Change.'"

Wood, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry", 4.

Peter Goldsmith, "Note: 'Draft: 12 February 2003,'" *Attorney General's Office*, February 12, 2003.

⁴¹⁰ Brummell, "Letter to Matthew Rycroft: 'Iraq.'"

Brummell, "Letter to Martin Hemming: 'Iraq - Position of the CDS.'"

Brummell, "Iraq: Legal Basis for Use of Force - Note of Discussion with Attorney General."

⁴¹¹ Brummell, "Letter to Tom McKane: 'Iraq: No Fly Zones (NFZs).'"

⁴¹² Ibid.

Goldsmith, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 27 January 2010", 9-10, 33, 91, 131-136.

for that revival to occur.⁴¹³ In this way, the revival argument had been used to legally justify the No-Fly Zones (based on the humanitarian relief efforts called for in SCR 688) and the 1998 bombings (based on the obligations put on Iraq in SCR 678, only conditionally suspended in SCR 687, and the 'flagrant violation' described in SCR 1205 reviving, for the United Kingdom, SCR 678).⁴¹⁴

The Attorney General did not attend Cabinet on a regular basis.⁴¹⁵ This was a matter of tradition, not exclusion.⁴¹⁶ Likewise, the advice of the Attorney General must be made available to Cabinet in full, but the Attorney must not be present.⁴¹⁷ Another custom is that the advice of the Attorney General is not usually made public.⁴¹⁸ Nor had it ever happened before, as happened now, that the Armed Forces and the Civil Service demand that the Attorney General give them explicit, written advice that participation in the invasion would be legal.⁴¹⁹ In the first half of 2002, the Attorney General was not involved in policy discussions on Iraq, but presumed some were taking place.⁴²⁰ Likewise, he did not systematically receive intelligence.⁴²¹

Goldsmith got most of his information via the press.⁴²² As the rumours about the possibility of military action mounted, Goldsmith asked for a briefing so as to assess the threat for himself.⁴²³ He was particularly concerned about American ideas of pre-emptive strikes.⁴²⁴ His

⁴¹³ Ibid., 9, 33, 131-136

UN Security Council, "Security Council Resolution 687."

Brummell, "Letter to Tom McKane: 'Iraq: No Fly Zones (NFZs).'"

⁴¹⁴ Ibid.

UN Security Council, "Security Council Resolution 688."

UN Security Council, "Security Council Resolution 678."

UN Security Council, "Security Council Resolution 687."

UN Security Council, "Security Council Resolution 1205."

⁴¹⁵ Straw, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 February 2010", 30.

Goldsmith, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 27 January 2010", 16, 199.

Short, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 February 2010", 28.

⁴¹⁶ Goldsmith, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 27 January 2010", 199.

"Cabinet 'No Place for Attorney,'" *BBC News*, March 24, 2007, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/politics/6490597.stm.

⁴¹⁷ Goldsmith, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 27 January 2010", 199.

Gus O'Donnell, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 28 January 2011," 2011, 38-39.

⁴¹⁸ Butler et al., "Review of Intelligence on Weapons of Mass Destruction", 93-94.

⁴¹⁹ Hemming, "Letter to David Brummell: 'Iraq: Position of the CDS.'"

Short, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 February 2010", 48.

Wood, "Note: 'Iraq,'" October 15, 2002.

Goldsmith, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 27 January 2010", 180, 184, 186.

Wood, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 26 January 2010", 44.

⁴²⁰ Goldsmith, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 27 January 2010", 16-17.

⁴²¹ Ibid., 10-11, 163-164.

⁴²² Ibid., 12-13.

⁴²³ Ibid., 13-14.

⁴²⁴ Ibid., 12-13.

conclusion was that there was no sufficient threat for the time being.⁴²⁵ On 28 March 2002, the Attorney General wrote to Geoff Hoon.⁴²⁶ The Defence Secretary had publicly suggested – when cornered and while trying to avoid the question, Hoon later defended himself – that there might be a legal basis for military action.⁴²⁷ The Attorney General obviously strongly disagreed.⁴²⁸ The response – ‘I said that we would be entitled, in principle, to act in self-defence, if it was shown that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction’ – he did not agree with either, but let it go.⁴²⁹

Overall, the Attorney General testified to the Iraq Inquiry, his advice was not asked for, not even in preliminary form, and when it was given nonetheless – as is the Attorney General’s duty – it was unwelcome.⁴³⁰ His repeated stance to Downing Street was consistent with that of the previous years.⁴³¹ Self-defence and humanitarian intervention would not, in this case, be an applicable basis for force, implying that the UN route was the only option.⁴³² There, a new resolution clearly determining a material breach would be necessary; even if such a breach were decided on by the Security Council the use of force would have to be necessary and proportional; and regime change *per se* could never be the goal.⁴³³ The Attorney General felt compelled to give the Prime Minister a written reminder of this before he left for the United States after the summer.⁴³⁴

The United States agreed to go down the UN route and negotiations on the future SCR 1441 got on their way. The Attorney General was not asked for advice at all, not even in

Goldsmith, “Letter to the Prime Minister: ‘Iraq,’” July 30, 2002.

⁴²⁵ Goldsmith, “Letter to Geoffrey Hoon.”

Goldsmith, “Letter to the Prime Minister: ‘Iraq,’” July 30, 2002.

⁴²⁶ Goldsmith, “Letter to Geoffrey Hoon.”

⁴²⁷ Ibid.

Hoon, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 19 January 2010”, 65-66.

⁴²⁸ Goldsmith, “Letter to Geoffrey Hoon.”

⁴²⁹ Geoffrey Hoon, “Letter to the Attorney General,” *Ministry of Defence*, April 14, 2002.

Goldsmith, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 27 January 2010”, 17-19.

⁴³⁰ Ibid., 16-17, 23-27, 55, 60, 233.

⁴³¹ Ibid., 9-10, 32-33, 91, 131-136.

Brummell, “Letter to Tom McKane: ‘Iraq: No Fly Zones (NFZs).’”

⁴³² Grainger, “Letter: ‘Iraq, Regime Change.’”

Goldsmith, “Letter to the Prime Minister: ‘Iraq,’” July 30, 2002.

⁴³³ Ibid.

Michael Wood, “Letter to Cathy Adams: ‘Iraq: Latest Text,’” *Foreign and Commonwealth Office*, October 18, 2002.

Goldsmith, “Letter to Geoffrey Hoon.”

Goldsmith, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 27 January 2010”, 25-26.

⁴³⁴ Ibid., 22. It is unclear to me whether this written reminder is the letter of 30 July 2002, but that letter conveys the same message:

Goldsmith, “Letter to the Prime Minister: ‘Iraq,’” July 30, 2002.

preliminary form, yet drafting went on.⁴³⁵ (As said earlier, they negotiated and drafted it with the intention of there only being one resolution.) From what the Attorney General – and other legal officers in London – could tell, the draft did not look good enough, although it obviously still changed somewhat during later negotiation stages.⁴³⁶ On 18 October 2002 the Attorney General called Jack Straw to voice his concerns and disapproval, and four days later he met with Tony Blair.⁴³⁷ The Attorney General recalls it as a conversation in which regime change was a constant theme for the Prime Minister and in which he also brought up the concept of an ‘unreasonable veto’ à la Kosovo – even though Kosovo was based on different legal principles altogether.⁴³⁸ Moreover, in the case of Kosovo a Security Council veto was *avoided*, not ignored.⁴³⁹

When SCR 1441 was adopted, it was not strong enough to warrant military action by itself.⁴⁴⁰ The British legal case at this stage was the following: the Attorney General accepted the principle of the revival argument.⁴⁴¹ He remained of the opinion that it was for the Security Council to determine whether or not a material breach has taken place.⁴⁴² The resolution did *not* contain automaticity, in the sense that it was not in itself a green light to go to war.⁴⁴³ However, it *did* contain, in the Attorney General’s (contested) view, another kind of automaticity: namely that *if* another breach of UN resolutions happened, that would automatically be considered a material breach, serious enough to allow for corrective

⁴³⁵ Michael Wood, “Letter to Cathy Adams: ‘Iraq: Security Council Resolution 1441 (2002),” *Foreign and Commonwealth Office*, December 9, 2002.

Goldsmith, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 27 January 2010”, 62.

⁴³⁶ Mark Sedwill, “Note: ‘Iraq: Foreign Secretary’s Conversation with the Attorney-General, 18 October,” *Foreign and Commonwealth Office*, October 18, 2002.

Wood, “Letter to Cathy Adams: ‘Iraq: Latest Text.”

Adams, “Note: ‘Iraq: Record of the Attorney General’s Telephone Conversation with the Foreign Secretary, 18 October.”

Cathy Adams, “Letter to David Manning: ‘Iraq: Attorney-General’s Meeting With the Prime Minister, 22 October,” *Attorney General’s Office*, October 23, 2002.

Wood, “Note: ‘Iraq: Legal Basis for the Possible Use of Force.”

⁴³⁷ Goldsmith, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 27 January 2010”, 26-27.

⁴³⁸ *Ibid.*, 29-32.

Peter Ricketts, “Note: ‘Iraq: Resolutions: The ‘Kosovo Option,” *Foreign and Commonwealth Office*, October 3, 2002.

⁴³⁹ Wood, “Note: ‘Iraq: Legal Basis for Use of Force.”

Goldsmith, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 27 January 2010”, 31-32.

⁴⁴⁰ Goldsmith, “Note: ‘Draft - Iraq: Interpretation of Resolution 1441.”

⁴⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴² Brummell, “Note: ‘Iraq: Note of Telephone Conversation Between the Foreign Secretary and the Attorney General on Tuesday, 12 November 2002.”, 3.

Goldsmith, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 27 January 2010”, 57, 89.

⁴⁴³ Brummell, “Note: ‘Iraq: Note of Meeting at No. 10 Downing Street - 4.00 P.m., 19 December 2002.”
Goldsmith, “Note: ‘Draft - Iraq: Interpretation of Resolution 1441.”

measures.⁴⁴⁴ So the opinion of the Attorney General was that SCR 1441 gave Iraq one last chance; if it failed to take that chance, the nature of that offence, and thus the appropriate punishment, was predetermined and pre-accepted by the resolution.⁴⁴⁵ However, the preliminary advice remained that the Security Council needed to decide whether such a material breach had taken place – and thus whether the punishment was justified.⁴⁴⁶ A second phase in the Security Council was certainly needed.⁴⁴⁷

Once more, the Attorney General had to squash the overly optimistic thinking of the government, in which Chinese whispers were suggesting that he had agreed that war would now be legal.⁴⁴⁸ It was not. Weary once more of being boxed in, Goldsmith called Number 10 to emphasize that he was not sure – and doubtful.⁴⁴⁹ Once more they said they understood.

In December 2002, the Attorney General was eventually asked formally for advice through the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.⁴⁵⁰ The Foreign Office's lawyers still judged – indeed, to this day judge – that war would be illegal.⁴⁵¹ The legal advisor in New York, by contrast, assessed that no further resolution was needed.⁴⁵² On 14 January 2003, the Attorney General gave a preliminary version of his advice to Blair.⁴⁵³ That advice still gave a red light to military action.⁴⁵⁴ It was still a draft; indeed, formal and final advice was still not deemed necessary at this stage.⁴⁵⁵ Goldsmith asked for more information to better understand the context and use of words in SCR 1441.⁴⁵⁶ It was suggested that he should go to the United States and meet with the British as well as the American negotiators of the resolution.⁴⁵⁷ On

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid., 2.

Goldsmith, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 27 January 2010", 57-59, 151, 167.

⁴⁴⁵ Goldsmith, "Note: 'Draft - Iraq: Interpretation of Resolution 1441.'"

⁴⁴⁶ Ibid.

Goldsmith, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 27 January 2010", 92-93.

⁴⁴⁷ Goldsmith, "Note: 'Draft - Iraq: Interpretation of Resolution 1441.'"

Goldsmith, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 27 January 2010", 47.

⁴⁴⁸ Brummell, "Note: 'Iraq: Note of the Telephone Conversation Between the Attorney General and Jonathan Powell - Monday, 11th November 2002.'"

Goldsmith, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 27 January 2010", 53-54, 60.

⁴⁴⁹ Brummell, "Note: 'Iraq: Note of the Telephone Conversation Between the Attorney General and Jonathan Powell - Monday, 11th November 2002.'"

Goldsmith, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 27 January 2010", 55, 60.

⁴⁵⁰ Wood, "Letter to Cathy Adams: 'Iraq: Security Council Resolution 1441 (2002).'"

Goldsmith, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 27 January 2010", 62.

⁴⁵¹ Ibid., 92-93, 243.

⁴⁵² Ibid., 62.

⁴⁵³ Goldsmith, "Note: 'Draft - Iraq: Interpretation of Resolution 1441.'"

Goldsmith, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 27 January 2010", 69, 100.

⁴⁵⁴ Goldsmith, "Note: 'Draft - Iraq: Interpretation of Resolution 1441.'"

⁴⁵⁵ Wood, "Letter to Cathy Adams: 'Iraq: Security Council Resolution 1441 (2002).'"

⁴⁵⁶ Goldsmith, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 27 January 2010", 56, 60, 63, 69.

⁴⁵⁷ Ibid., 63.

23 January 2002 Peter Goldsmith met with Jeremy Greenstock, the British representative to the United Nations.⁴⁵⁸ He later described that in that conversation, Greenstock had ‘made some headway’, but had not convinced the Attorney General ‘yet’.⁴⁵⁹ Thus, when the Prime Minister went to see Bush at the end of the month, Goldsmith warned him that the legal answer was still a provisional ‘no’.⁴⁶⁰

Jack Straw, meanwhile, did ‘not accept’ the legal advice.⁴⁶¹ This was a most curious view, especially in the light of other arguments made later: in the meeting in which Cabinet approved of the war, most Cabinet members had been quite content with not debating the legal advice at all.⁴⁶² Instead they simply accepted it. Several people, including Straw, have argued or accepted that this was the right thing to do, as arguing about the Attorney General’s legal opinion – which is binding – is necessarily a ‘slightly sterile exercise’.⁴⁶³ That did not stop Straw from debating the legal advice earlier.⁴⁶⁴ Objecting to Goldsmith’s advice, the Foreign Secretary also said that he wanted the ‘full range’ of legal opinions to be included and considered.⁴⁶⁵ Of course, in this he implicitly ignored that at the time, *both* the FCO lawyers and the Attorney General agreed on what the legal opinion should be: ‘no’. Goldsmith rebuked the Foreign Secretary.⁴⁶⁶

In February 2003, the Attorney General flew to the United States to discuss the SCR 1441. It is this visit that changed his mind: on 27 February 2003 he thought that ‘a case can be made’ for the legality of an invasion.⁴⁶⁷ This in itself, by tradition, gave the green light for military

⁴⁵⁸ Peter Goldsmith, “Letter to the Prime Minister: ‘Iraq,’” *Attorney General’s Office*, January 30, 2003.

⁴⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

Goldsmith, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 27 January 2010”, 89.

⁴⁶⁰ Goldsmith, “Letter to the Prime Minister: ‘Iraq,’” January 30, 2003.

Goldsmith, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 27 January 2010”, 90-91.

⁴⁶¹ Straw, “Note to Michael Wood: ‘Iraq: Legal Basis for Use of Force.’”

Wood, “Note: ‘Iraq: Legal Basis for Use of Force.’”

Goldsmith, “Letter to the Foreign Secretary.”

Goldsmith, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 27 January 2010”, 93-96, 106.

⁴⁶² Prescott, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 30 July 2010”, 55-58, 60.

Short, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 February 2010”, 24, 29-30, 43.

⁴⁶³ Straw, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 February 2010”, 52.

Goldsmith, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 27 January 2010”, 217.

Prescott, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 30 July 2010”, 55-58, 60.

⁴⁶⁴ Goldsmith, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 27 January 2010”, 93-96, 106.

⁴⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 98.

⁴⁶⁶ Goldsmith, “Letter to the Foreign Secretary.”

Goldsmith, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 27 January 2010”, 94-95.

⁴⁶⁷ I have no indication beyond the Attorney General’s testimony to the Iraq Inquiry as to the correctness of this exact date, but in any case, a document of 11 March confirms that he has now changed his view:

Rycroft, “Letter to Simon McDonald: ‘Iraq: Legal and Military Aspects.’”

Goldsmith, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 27 January 2010”, 70-71, 125-126, 130-131.

action: the standard by which the British government judges the legal feasibility of its actions is not whether something is *certainly* or even *probably* legal.⁴⁶⁸ Rather, the burden is whether there is a *reasonable* – defensible – case for legality.⁴⁶⁹ Whether this standard is too low could probably be a political debate in and of itself; but this is not a standard which stems from the beginning of 2003. Goldsmith now felt that it was *not* necessary for the Security Council to come to a conclusion about whether Saddam Hussein had committed a further material breach: it merely needed to have a debate.⁴⁷⁰ After ‘further reflection’, the Attorney General even concluded that this view was not only a reasonable, but ‘the better view’.⁴⁷¹

Of course, the entire government denies any form of undue pressure on the Attorney General that made him come to this decision.⁴⁷² The legal rationale for the eventual British legal position is that SCR 1441 did *not* say that the Security Council needed to decide on further action; only that it needed to convene if this would occur.⁴⁷³ As such, it takes SCR 1441 literally (although of course, it could just as easily be argued that SCR 1441 does *not* contain the words ‘all necessary means’, the United Nations code for military action).⁴⁷⁴ The professed *argumentative* rationale – the reason why out of two possible legal reasonings, Goldsmith eventually preferred the one that held that the Security Council need not make a further decision – of the Attorney General was essentially that he could not believe that the United States would have accepted SCR 1441 if the resolution had prevented them from acting.⁴⁷⁵

In general, the Attorney General certainly recognised that the United States have a different stance on force and legality than the United Kingdom.⁴⁷⁶ Frankly, the position maintained by the United States is not only different from that of the United Kingdom, but from that of most of the rest of the world as well, not to mention from the Charter of the United Nations it signed (and which severely limits the acceptable rationales for the use of military force). Yet in this instance, the Attorney General reasoned that if the American negotiators held the view that they were not bound by this resolution in this way, then neither was the United

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid., 131.

⁴⁶⁹ Rycroft, “Letter to Simon McDonald: ‘Iraq: Legal and Military Aspects.’”

⁴⁷⁰ Brummell, “Iraq: Legal Basis for Use of Force - Note of Discussion with Attorney General.”

⁴⁷¹ Ibid.

⁴⁷² Goldsmith, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 27 January 2010”, 190-192.

Blair, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 29 January 2010”, 150.

Blair, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 21 January 2011”, 66-68.

⁴⁷³ Brummell, “Iraq: Legal Basis for Use of Force - Note of Discussion with Attorney General.”

⁴⁷⁴ Goldsmith, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 27 January 2010”, 82.

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid., 86-87, 241.

⁴⁷⁶ Ibid. *88.

Kingdom.⁴⁷⁷ He implicitly trusted and shared the American view on international law and whether the United Nations and the Security Council are binding institutions when it comes to the use of force. As Clare Short pointed out, given Britain's general stance on international law and the authority of the United Nations, the Bush administration 'seems the most extraordinary place in the world to go and get advice about international law'.⁴⁷⁸

Moreover, Goldsmith not only relied on the Americans making the right call on what they should have got out of the negotiation process: he also simply believed they must have necessarily got it, because they are too competent to have possibly made a mistake.⁴⁷⁹ By contrast, Goldsmith did not talk to any French negotiators, or indeed anyone else on the Security Council.⁴⁸⁰ He said it would have been impossible to ask and talk to the French.⁴⁸¹ Instead he relied on the Americans and the British saying that France and Russia 'knew they'd lost' when passing the resolution (for which he admittedly had to take Washington at its word).⁴⁸² This disregards the fact that the United States and the United Kingdom also had not got everything that they wanted out of the resolution (particularly the expression 'all necessary means' instead of 'serious consequences') – the argument works both ways.⁴⁸³ Also, presumably a Security Council resolution does not simply mean what the Permanent Five want or accept it to mean: the Council has fifteen members. Of course, none of this means *in se* that the Goldsmith's final position was wrong; but it does make its justification rather shaky.

This explanation shows why the Attorney General changed his mind when he did. It does not rely on undue pressure exerted by other members of government. It is also an alternative to a theory that holds that the Attorney General felt obliged to give the green light given the stakes Tony Blair had put on British participation: the military build-up in the region, the commitments to the United States, and indeed his own Prime Ministership and the most successful Labour government ever, a government that Goldsmith was a Cabinet member of and that had propelled him into the House of Lords.

⁴⁷⁷ Ibid., 86-88, 111-114, 127-128, 241.

⁴⁷⁸ Ibid., 26.

⁴⁷⁹ Ibid., 86-87, 241.

⁴⁸⁰ Ibid., 115-116, 156.

⁴⁸¹ Ibid., 96-97, 156.

⁴⁸² Ibid., 77, 111-114, 127, 157, 160-162, 242.

⁴⁸³ Ibid., 82.

Others have made the same remark:

Akande, "Submissions to the UK Iraq Inquiry on the Legality of the Iraq War (Updated)."

Moreover, the Attorney General himself did so on 14 January 2003 in:

Goldsmith, "Note: 'Draft - Iraq: Interpretation of Resolution 1441.'"

It is an alternative that does not argue that Goldsmith was pressurised or effectively sidelined by not being informed; by not being asked for advice; by annoyance when he *did* give advice; by Chinese whispers; by other members of government on several occasions disregarding and publicly contradicting his provisional legal advice; by legal judgements being challenged; by those at the heart of the policy asking repeatedly that negative legal advice be not put on paper or be kept provisional; by legal advice not being properly integrated into the policy guidelines sent out to the embassies.⁴⁸⁴ It does not argue that the British government cornered the Attorney General. It is certainly the most generous interpretation on why Britain changed its legal position in February 2002. It is likely to be at least one causal factor of why the Attorney General changed his mind.⁴⁸⁵ Nonetheless, the fact remains that even this explanation, 'because the Americans would not have gotten it wrong,' is a less than impressive argument for changing one's mind and giving the green light for war.

Cabinet and Parliament

That the Attorney General had given the green light meant that the British government *could* go to war. The next question was whether it *should*. This political question had obviously been resolved a long time ago for the key players involved. It is not that they wanted to go to war from immediately after 9/11. Rather, after 9/11 Blair had decided that *something* needed to be done. Ideally, that would be disarmament through the United Nations. For Tony Blair, the preferred alternative had been disarmament without the United Nations, with military force if need be. For the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the preferred alternative was whatever else could be done in the United Nations, as acting outside of the Security Council would have been illegal and therefore impossible.

However, now SCR 1441 had been passed and the Attorney General had decided that its meaning was that war would be legal – and backed by the authority of the Security Council. While peaceful disarmament through the Security Council had failed, this interpretation of

⁴⁸⁴ Goldsmith, "Letter to the Foreign Secretary."

John Grainger, "Letter to Mr Pattison: 'Rights Under International Law to Occupy and Administer Iraq After a Conflict,'" *Foreign and Commonwealth Office*, January 31, 2003.

Straw, "Note to Michael Wood: 'Iraq: Legal Basis for Use of Force.'"

Jack Straw, "Letter to the Attorney General," *Foreign and Commonwealth Office*, February 20, 2003.

Michael Wood, "Note: 'Iraq: Legality of Use of Force,'" *Foreign and Commonwealth Office*, August 15, 2002.

Short, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 February 2010", 26-27.

Goldsmith, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 27 January 2010", 16-19, 23-24, 26-28, 53-55, 60, 93-96, 98.

⁴⁸⁵ Confirmation to the author by a senior interlocutor of the British government at the time, under Chatham House rules.

SCR 1441 nonetheless meant that military disarmament through that resolution was still possible. The official position then became that Britain *could* have disarmament by force through the Security Council. It was a trick of language that masked the fact that policy had shifted significantly from what the same words had meant at an earlier date.

However, this decision still needed approval from both Cabinet and the Commons. Cabinet approval was obviously necessary as Cabinet was jointly responsible for the decisions of the government.⁴⁸⁶ The approval of Parliament was a new idea: it quickly set a precedent and since then, at least three Private Members Bills have been presented in Parliament to enshrine this new right of the House, although they have not been successful.⁴⁸⁷ Nonetheless, this vote was not binding. Its importance was political and symbolic, with Tony Blair hanging his Prime Ministership and the continuance of his Labour government on the outcome (he had Tory support, though).⁴⁸⁸

Cabinet

Unlike Parliament, Cabinet was not merely supposed to approve of Tony Blair's Iraq policy: it was supposed to help shape it. In reality, Tony Blair had a tendency for limiting the people and formality involved in making policy decisions: his so-called 'sofa government' – has been well documented.⁴⁸⁹ The Prime Minister tended to rely on a handful of close advisors rather than his entire Cabinet.⁴⁹⁰ Cabinet meetings were short and did not allow for real discussion; there also usually were no papers beyond the agenda ('leading members of Cabinet' got access to them outside of Cabinet).⁴⁹¹ The Butler Report noted its concern 'that the informality and circumscribed character of the Government's procedures which we saw in the context of policy-making towards Iraq risks reducing the scope for informed collective

⁴⁸⁶ O'Donnell, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 28 January 2011", 58.

⁴⁸⁷ Select Committee on Constitution, "Waging War: Parliament's Role and Responsibility" (London, 2006), <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200506/ldselect/ldconst/236/23603.htm>.

Catherine Haddon, "Parliament, the Royal Prerogative and Decisions to Go to War," *Institute for Government*, 2013, <http://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/blog/6589/parliament-the-royal-prerogative-and-decisions-to-go-to-war/>.

⁴⁸⁸ Blair, "The Case for War: Speech to the House of Commons."

⁴⁸⁹ Butler et al., "Review of Intelligence on Weapons of Mass Destruction", 161-162, 174.

Carne Ross, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry," July 12, 2010, 10.

Prescott, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 30 July 2010", 11, 89.

Short, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 February 2010", 4.

⁴⁹⁰ Butler et al., "Review of Intelligence on Weapons of Mass Destruction", 161-162, 174.

Short, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 February 2010", 17-20.

Prescott, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 30 July 2010", 4.

⁴⁹¹ Butler et al., "Review of Intelligence on Weapons of Mass Destruction", 161-162.

Blair, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 21 January 2011", 11-12, 21.

Short, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 February 2010", 3, 29.

political judgement'.⁴⁹² It certainly seems – friends and enemies alike agree – that Tony Blair's preferred way of doing things was solving them before they came to Cabinet.⁴⁹³ If people wanted to raise issues or critique parts of the official line, the Prime Minister would see them separately.⁴⁹⁴

Cabinet did not discuss Iraq policy in any substantial way – none of the policy-makers involved deny this.⁴⁹⁵ For those who were involved in Tony Blair's ad hoc meetings that replaced Cabinet, it was not a problem.⁴⁹⁶ Indeed, most of 10 Downing Street felt that enough critical discussions were taking place (albeit with them instead of the entire Cabinet), and senior Cabinet members that were involved in those extra-Cabinetarian discussions virtually unanimously distrusted Cabinet because of potential press leaks.⁴⁹⁷ Those excluded from the process were less than impressed.⁴⁹⁸ Cabinet did not have access to the options paper of March 2002, nor was there any discussion of its content.⁴⁹⁹ This meant that Cabinet was not involved in any fundamental policy discussion on Iraq, nor was it informed of or had a say in the strategy.⁵⁰⁰ It was only presented with the paper written for the Parliamentary Labour Party, which was written as (internal) propaganda material and did not discuss policy in any detail, let alone policy options or issues.⁵⁰¹

⁴⁹² Butler et al., "Review of Intelligence on Weapons of Mass Destruction", 161-162, 174.

Short, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 February 2010", 3.

⁴⁹³ Prescott, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 30 July 2010", 73.

Short, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 February 2010", 3-4.

⁴⁹⁴ Prescott, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 30 July 2010", 73.

Short, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 February 2010", 3-4.

⁴⁹⁵ Butler et al., "Review of Intelligence on Weapons of Mass Destruction", 161-162.

Prescott, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 30 July 2010", 7.

Short, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 February 2010", 3.

⁴⁹⁶ Prescott, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 30 July 2010", 8.

Blair, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 21 January 2011", 9, 26.

Blair, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 29 January 2010", 22.

⁴⁹⁷ Prescott, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 30 July 2010", 7-8.

Blair, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 21 January 2011", 9-10.

Blair, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 29 January 2010", 20-21, 37.

Short, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 February 2010", 4.

Straw, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 21 January 2010", 110.

⁴⁹⁸ As was the Butler Report.

⁴⁹⁹ Butler et al., "Review of Intelligence on Weapons of Mass Destruction", 161.

Short, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 February 2010", 20.

Blair, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 21 January 2011", 9.

⁵⁰⁰ Ibid., 21.

⁵⁰¹ Butler et al., "Review of Intelligence on Weapons of Mass Destruction", 161.

Mark Sedwill, "Letter to Matthew Rycroft: 'Iraq: Cabinet Discussion,'" *Foreign and Commonwealth Office*, March 6, 2002.

This does not mean that Cabinet never discussed Iraq: it did.⁵⁰² However, first of all there were no Cabinet discussions at all between 11 April 2002 and 23 September 2002 (with a very brief exception of Iraq being mentioned in the context of Afghanistan on 20 June 2002).⁵⁰³ Secondly, when Cabinet was discussing Iraq, it was always focusing on details.⁵⁰⁴ What Tony Blair describes as ‘detailed discussions’ are just that: discussions in which the strategy is just announced to Cabinet (or, in fact, often withheld, when Tony Blair quite disingenuously reassures Cabinet members that no decision had yet been made⁵⁰⁵) and in which Cabinet members only have the possibility to discuss minor concerns.⁵⁰⁶ Tony Blair was happy to take practical advice from his Cabinet; he and his close advisors were not happy to give them any real information (‘risk of leaks’). There is an interesting tension when Tony Blair claims both that his Cabinet could not be given any information because it might look bad when leaked to the media, and that they surely must have known what was going on without explicitly being informed, because he was continuously and openly given his opinion to the press.⁵⁰⁷

By March or April 2002 Cabinet had, however implicitly, ‘endorsed’ the policy that meant going to the United Nations to peacefully resolve the outstanding problems with Iraq.⁵⁰⁸ One year later, that policy had not worked, but the preferred alternative of the Prime Minister – dealing with Iraq militarily – and that which the Foreign Office presumed to be the preferred alternative – doing whatever the United Nations allowed to disarm or at least contain Saddam Hussein – had sort of come together. The Attorney General’s approval of war based

⁵⁰² Sources vary on the exact number of meetings. The Butler report says 24, whereas Straw mentions 28 meetings.

Butler et al., “Review of Intelligence on Weapons of Mass Destruction”, 161.

Campbell, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 12 January 2010”, 57.

⁵⁰³ Blair, “Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry”, 3.

Blair, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 21 January 2011”, 20, 58.

⁵⁰⁴ Ibid., 11-13, 26.

Short, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 February 2010”, 11-12.

⁵⁰⁵ Tony Blair might argue it was not disingenuous because no decision had yet been taken and no type of final commitment had been made in Crawford. It is true that the decision to go to war was not final at that stage at all. However, it was not final because Saddam Hussein might still comply and disarm. The decision to go to war was not final because it might well be avoided. Yet – as he admits – the Prime Minister *had* given a commitment to deal with Baghdad *one way or another*. Given that this is what his Cabinet – and country – were worried about, to play on the unlikely possibility of Iraqi disarmament as a way to deny that a decision had been made is plain wrong.

Blair, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 21 January 2011”, 36-37.

Blair, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 29 January 2010”, 42, 45, 49, 56, 92-94, 101-102, 168-169.

Short, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 February 2010”, 4-5.

⁵⁰⁶ Ibid., 4.

Blair, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 21 January 2011”, 11-13, 26.

⁵⁰⁷ Ibid., 15-19, 24.

Short, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 February 2010”, 4.

⁵⁰⁸ Blair, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 21 January 2011”, 15-19.

on SCR 1441 meant that it was possible to invade to remove Saddam Hussein, for the purpose of disarmament and with the 'legality', if not the legitimacy, of Security Council-based action. The troop build-up had taken place and 'key players' agreed on policy. Many members of the government – particularly those who had been excluded – were pertinently unhappy with the course events had taken.⁵⁰⁹ Yet many of them also felt a real and deep desire to keep the government going.⁵¹⁰ This Labour government was haunted by its history of deep internal division and ensuing lack of electoral success and success in government.⁵¹¹ This Labour government was arguably the most successful one in recent history. No-one wanted to rock the boat.⁵¹²

In addition, and crucially, Cabinet was not made aware of the full difficulties that had surrounded the legal discussion.⁵¹³ It had not had access to papers throughout, it had gotten most of its news from the media, and communication within the government had shut down.⁵¹⁴ When Cabinet was asked to give its stamp of approval to the military invasion of Iraq, it only knew that the war was considered legal by the Attorney General. It did not know of the many caveats in his advice, most notably the caveat that he had demanded that the Prime Minister vouch for the political necessity of war.⁵¹⁵ A loop had effectively been created: the Attorney General said it was legal only pending the political judgment that was necessary. That judgment was given by the Prime Minister without discussion with his Cabinet. Cabinet then was *told* the war was legal tout court, and because of this endorsed the policy and political judgment of war.

Of course, as many have argued in defence of Cabinet not having been given the full legal advice, it was not the task – or indeed the right – of Cabinet to squabble over legal opinion with the Attorney General.⁵¹⁶ But on the other hand, it is Cabinet's duty to make a political

⁵⁰⁹ Short, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 February 2010", 84.

Prescott, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 30 July 2010", 21.

⁵¹⁰ Ibid., 21.

Blair, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 21 January 2011", 29.

Straw, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 21 January 2010", 110.

⁵¹¹ Short, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 February 2010", 84.

Prescott, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 30 July 2010", 21, 70-74.

⁵¹² Short, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 February 2010", 84.

Prescott, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 30 July 2010", 21.

⁵¹³ Powell, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 18 January 2010", 110.

⁵¹⁴ O'Donnell, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 28 January 2011", 39.

Butler et al., "Review of Intelligence on Weapons of Mass Destruction", 161-162, 174.

⁵¹⁵ O'Donnell, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 28 January 2011", 39.

Powell, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 18 January 2010", 110.

⁵¹⁶ Prescott, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 30 July 2010", 55-60

Goldsmith, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 27 January 2010", 217.

Straw, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 February 2010", 52.

judgement about whether it is *wise* to go to Iraq. The details of the legal advice certainly mattered in making that assessment and Cabinet is entitled to the full advice.⁵¹⁷ It would have avoided this 'loop' in which Cabinet endorses a war because it was endorsed by the Attorney General because it was endorsed by the Prime Minister (who should have asked the Cabinet). As it was, Cabinet was told that the war would be legal and accepted that judgment.⁵¹⁸ Clare Short tried to ask questions but was hushed down.⁵¹⁹ The sphere was much fractured.⁵²⁰ Robin Cook, former Foreign Secretary, was no longer present: he had resigned over Iraq.⁵²¹ Cabinet approved of military action, although, in the words of a Cabinet member, it was not so much whole-hearted approval as lack of objection.⁵²² For all constitutional purposes, it meant the country would go to war soon.

Parliament

On 18 March 2003, Parliament was asked to vote on military intervention in Iraq.⁵²³ The stakes were wider than Iraq: Tony Blair had put his political survival on the line.⁵²⁴ Whips did a furious job trying to get guarantees from the MPs that they would back the government.⁵²⁵ The Conservative Party too backed intervention; nonetheless, it was a fairly close call and the 'largest' Labour revolt ever.⁵²⁶ Robin Cook resigned too.⁵²⁷ The parliamentary vote consisted of two separate votes.⁵²⁸ The first motion that was put to the floor was one accepting the invasion.⁵²⁹ Then an amendment to that motion was proposed, which urged for more time and a further UN resolution.⁵³⁰ This amendment was defeated by 396 to 217 votes.⁵³¹ 139

⁵¹⁷ O'Donnell, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 28 January 2011", 39.

Short, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 February 2010", 31-33.

⁵¹⁸ Ibid., 24, 30, 43.

⁵¹⁹ Ibid., 29-30.

Powell, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 18 January 2010", 129.

⁵²⁰ Short, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 February 2010", 24.

⁵²¹ Cook, "Resignation Speech."

⁵²² Short, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 February 2010", 24.

⁵²³ "House of Commons Debates: Tuesday, 18 March 2003."

⁵²⁴ Blair, "The Case for War: Speech to the House of Commons."

"House of Commons Debates: Monday, 17 March 2003."

"House of Commons Debates: Tuesday, 18 March 2003."

⁵²⁵ Straw, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 21 January 2010", 110.

⁵²⁶ Bairwell Ltd, "Iraq — Case for War Not Established — Rejected — 18 Mar 2003 at 21:15," *The Public Whip*, accessed November 2, 2016, <http://www.publicwhip.org.uk/division.php?date=2003-03-18&number=117&showall=yes#voters>.

Whether it was indeed the largest revolt ever is hard to access without going through all the records of every parliamentary vote; the claim comes from one rebel MP.

"Blair Wins War Backing Amid Revolt," *BBC News*, March 19, 2003, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/politics/2862325.stm.

⁵²⁷ Cook, "Resignation Speech."

⁵²⁸ "House of Commons Debates: Tuesday, 18 March 2003."

⁵²⁹ Ibid.

⁵³⁰ Ibid.

members from the Labour party had voted in favour of the amendment, thereby rebelling against the Prime Minister.⁵³² After this defeat of the amendment, the vote on the original motion was easier: 412 MPs to 149 endorsed the decision for war.⁵³³ The invasion started the next day.

5. CONCLUSION

Three important points stand out from the way in which Britain decided to go to war. The first is that the shift from containment to disarmament was the result of competing pressures. Important standing principles in British foreign policy (such as a commitment to the United Nations), usual Iraq policy and international law all pointed policy in the direction of the Security Council and containment. Blair's insistence that Iraq's old regime could no longer be tolerated after the 2001 terrorist attacks was a force in favour of disarmament. In this, he made promises to the United States which at the time were both against British foreign policy (as defined by the Foreign Office and understood by the government as a whole) and quite possibly impossible to keep without breaking international law. To members of Cabinet, he gave the impression of not having given any clear commitments yet. Either way, the Foreign Office followed Blair's direction but framed it within what it considered to be the minimal requirements for any Iraq policy. These included following the Security Council and a disavowal of illegal action. The resulting policy thus became disarmament via the Security Council.

The second important point is that this policy was dependent on a complex negotiation with both the United States and the Security Council, yet the government did not develop a preferred alternative if this absolutely central negotiation were to fail. Instead, it had two implicit alternatives. For virtually everyone except the Prime Minister (and one or two advisors), the alternative was to stick with the Security Council and abandon disarmament by force if the Security Council would not agree to such action. Two minimal requirements that, if not fulfilled, would trigger this alternative were international law and a commitment to the Security Council. Moreover, because an invasion is a huge commitment, it should only be undertaken if there is a plan to bring it to success. Without a coherent strategy to link means and ends – a safe Iraq that was a stable neighbour in the region – the alternative was better than the policy of disarmament by force. This, too, was read as a minimal requirement.

⁵³¹ Ibid.

⁵³² Bairwell Ltd, "Iraq — Case for War Not Established — Rejected — 18 Mar 2003 at 21:15."

⁵³³ "House of Commons Debates: Tuesday, 18 March 2003."

For the Prime Minister, by contrast, the next best option would be disarmament without the Security Council. He paid lip service to the ideas of international law, legitimacy in the Security Council and the need to have a clear plan on how to do the invasion, but at the same time his behaviour made it abundantly clear that these concerns did not feature prominently in his thoughts. The best way to describe it seems to be that he preferred not to engage with those questions until they became unavoidable. As it turned out, he managed to obtain most minimal requirements (except for legality, for which a rather improbable *deus ex machina* occurred) until *after* the invasion itself. Before the invasion (until it was too late anyway), he was not willing to let the minimal requirements of the rest of the government – to which he nominally agreed – limit his chosen policy course. The only minimal requirement that carried weight for the Prime Minister was his own minimal requirement: Saddam Hussein *must* be disarmed. If that was not possible via the chosen route of disarmament through the Security Council, his favoured alternative was disarmament without its genuine approval.

The third point is that the Prime Minister's vision prevailed. In hindsight, and with a focus on the Prime Minister (the most common way of understanding the Iraq war), the invasion might seem inevitable: the very thing the Prime Minister had committed to – if it turned out necessary – as early as in Crawford, almost a year before the invasion, and perhaps even as early as immediately after 9/11. This reading underestimates the extent to which most policy departments as well as politicians continued Iraq policy along more traditional lines until early 2001. They were preparing for the possibility of an invasion, to be sure, but this was assumed to be in the context of a United Nations-approved military campaign. For a long time, what ended up as British policy existed only in the rhetoric and wishes of the Prime Minister.

We must be unequivocally clear that a change of policy *did* happen: policy changed from disarmament via the Security Council to disarmament disregarding the Security Council in any meaningful sense. Because of a dubious interpretation of international law and with an overly generous interpretation of the Security Council's wishes, one might try to argue – as the United Kingdom's official stance has been since – that the United Kingdom *did* in the end go to war with Security Council approval, as had been the policy all along. This is not what happened. The Security Council did not approve in the meaningful sense that London had been pursuing all along, as demonstrated – amongst other aspects – by London's frantic efforts to build consensus for a second resolution, to plead with the United States for more time, and by the dynamics of the unwilling six small middle nations as well as France and Russia.

A policy shift therefore needs to be explained. Cabinet chose grudgingly, but in the end, it supported the preferred alternative put forward by Blair rather than the preferred alternative that had been implicit in policy preparations. It did so despite serious concerns about the post-invasion plans and despite lack of support from the international community. This has been explained as a desire to not rock the boat and make an already fractured situation in Cabinet worse. The Labour government decided to stick together. Still, it might be worth asking why it coalesced around this policy, and why it felt uncomfortable with internal critique.

Looking at it through the lens of BATNAs, this reaction is expected. Policy options that are not prepared or thought about become unthinkable. Most people, when confronted with insecurity about the best alternative (or, as I call it, preferred alternatives), tend to be overly pessimistic about the alternative. Moreover, precisely because neither a preferred alternative nor minimal requirements were ever explicated, it was easy to accept the argument that this *was* simply a continuation of policy as it was meant all along – even though it was not. Thus, Cabinet was in a situation in which no alternatives to the policy were ever developed, in which minimal requirements have never been articulated clearly enough to easily argue that this *was* a change of policy, and in which one policy looked more like it was the original – prepared, imaginable – policy. This is the policy Cabinet ended up supporting.

This chapter's contribution to the overall thesis is that it demonstrated that the British government, in making policy, never clearly defined the limits of that policy. The policy that was pursued was disarmament via the Security Council; however, if that policy was to fail, it was never explicit what the preferred alternative would be. Nor did the government articulate any corresponding minimal requirements. There were two implicit preferred alternatives, though. One was disarmament without the support of the Security Council (which proves feasible only because of a technical claim of legality). This was Blair's preferred alternative, and the alternative that won out politically, as demonstrated in this chapter. The lack of defined preferred alternative and minimal requirements probably made it easier for Blair to push through his idea of the preferred alternative, for his alternative *looked* quite close to the initial policy (even though it was substantially different).

However, as the next chapter will show, another implicit preferred alternative had guided Whitehall's preparation of Iraq policy. This preferred alternative was based on the presumption that Security Council support was a minimal requirement, and that therefore the British policy of pursuing disarmament would be abandoned without that support. In other words, the plans that Whitehall departments has been making for the Iraq policy were

all based on their old assumptions: on the idea that London would either disarm with the Security Council or not attack Baghdad without support of the Security Council and thus the United Nations. That Whitehall could prepare for one alternative and Cabinet vote on another, is the result of the failure to define the preferred alternative. As the fifth chapter demonstrates, this meant that the plans were not suited for the conditions in which Britain decided to go to war. As a result, London was badly prepared for its own invasion of Iraq, most notably the phase after the fall of Baghdad.

Chapter IV: Preparing for War

1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter is about the planning that took place in the various Whitehall departments before March 2003. It does not concern itself with the decision-making process on what policy to take: this was covered in chapter II. Instead, it focuses on the preparation of the policy. It also does not address the implementation of the policy: what happened when Britain invaded, and the policy and preparation were put to the test, is the remit of chapter IV. What the chapter addresses, then, is the civil service. It looks at how a government policy is made to work; how the words of Cabinet generate work in the various government departments. This planning is what this chapter addresses: it provides the link between words (in chapter II) and action (in chapter IV).

The chapter covers the Ministry of Defence (MOD), the Department for International Development (DFID), the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO), and Cabinet, including the Cabinet's Defence Overseas Secretariat (ODS). For the first three, I will discuss the departmental context in which Iraq preparation took place; the planning process or timeline of the preparations; and the content of the plans that were made. I will then tease out the assumptions underlying those preparations and summarize what the department's plan and preparedness were on the eve of the invasion. For the Cabinet Office, I simply discuss first its function and then its failure to fulfil that role.

Two distinct problems occurred during Whitehall's preparation of Iraq policy. The first is that Whitehall's plans were interdepartmentally incoherent and underdeveloped. This was worsened both by different departments having somewhat different understandings of the government's preferred alternative, and by the fact that for some departments (DFID), the preferred alternative was much more important to the plans than for others (MOD). Secondly, these incoherent and underdeveloped plans became even more problematic when the government suddenly adopted an unforeseen preferred alternative: the plans suddenly also became *unsuitable* for the circumstances of the invasion. The next chapter shows that during the invasion, many of the plans were unusable indeed. This chapter shows how the plans were made and how which assumptions became imbedded in the plans.

2. MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

Context: Resources

The core budget that is allocated to Defence in the normal government budget is meant to cover the costs of maintaining military forces ready for military action.⁵³⁴ It is not meant to fund any military action: the net additional cost of military operations is funded separately by the Treasury Reserve.⁵³⁵ Although the *core budget* was small and going down in term of purchasing power, there were few problems with the funding of the *operation*, that is the net additional cost of the invasion of Iraq.⁵³⁶ However, a third money stream was also necessary: money for reconstruction projects in Iraq.⁵³⁷ The Treasury was reluctant to free up money for this purpose.⁵³⁸ It assumed the money would have to primarily come from the (core) budget of DFID, and we will discuss this further under that heading later in this chapter.⁵³⁹

There were other concerns and stresses at the time as well. Firstly, Britain was engaged in Afghanistan as well as Iraq. Secondly, in late 2002 there was a risk of a fire fighters' strike, which meant that part of the military had to be kept in reserve for emergency cover.⁵⁴⁰ Thirdly, during the preparation time for Iraq, the Ministry of Defence, like other departments across Whitehall, was moving to a different accounting system: from cash accounting to resource accounting.⁵⁴¹ A misunderstanding of this new system led to unexpected savings that the Ministry of Defence needed to make: while they did their best to insulate Iraq from this, that itself inevitably meant that other parts of the system became less well funded.⁵⁴²

Planning process

September 2001 to April 2002: Afghanistan

⁵³⁴ Mann, McKane, and Woolley, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 July 2010", 9, 32, 72-73, 80-91.

⁵³⁵ Ibid., 9, 32, 72-73, 80-91.

⁵³⁶ Ibid., 53-54.

Mann, McKane, and Woolley, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 July 2010", 32, 73-74.

McKane, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 19 January 2011", 15.

Tebbit, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 3 February 2010", 11-12, 70.

⁵³⁷ Tebbit and Boyce, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 3 December 2009", 109-110.

⁵³⁸ Money for reconstruction is a prime example of something falling through the cracks of the system through lack of a specific mechanism to fund it.

Short, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 February 2010", 14, 72.

Sally Keeble, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry," July 2010, 2

⁵³⁹ McKane, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 19 January 2011", 87-88.

⁵⁴⁰ Tebbit and Boyce, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 3 December 2009", 36.

Sean Rayment, "30,000 Soldiers on Alert to Step in for Striking Firemen," *The Telegraph*, August 4, 2002, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1403508/30000-soldiers-on-alert-to-step-in-for-striking-firemen.html>.

⁵⁴¹ Mann, McKane, and Woolley, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 July 2010", 17.

⁵⁴² Tebbit and Boyce, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 3 December 2009", 10-12.

Mann, McKane, and Woolley, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 July 2010", 39-48, 50-60.

After the 'classical strategic shock' that was 9/11, the British defence system went in overdrive.⁵⁴³ The United Kingdom joined the United States with Operation VERITAS, the initial British part of Operation Enduring Freedom and London also positioned a three-star officer at Central Command (CENTCOM) in Tampa (Jock Stirrup, for the Afghan operations, replaced in January 2002 by the Lieutenant Cedric Delves).⁵⁴⁴ In April 2002, Delves left his post in Tampa and was replaced by a two-star officer, a move that indicates that the British MOD saw no immediate need for a higher person there.⁵⁴⁵ At this stage, even if the United Kingdom had wanted too, it would not have been able to consider Iraq yet.⁵⁴⁶ However, MoD contributed to interdepartmental papers in advance of the Prime Minister's visit to Crawford in April 2002.⁵⁴⁷ The advice in these papers, which were political rather than military in nature, was to not exclude any possibilities, including military action, assuming that a number of conditions would be met.⁵⁴⁸

April 2002 to August 2002: Considering options

From April 2002 on, the Ministry of Defence started to think about Iraq.⁵⁴⁹ After Crawford, it was clearer that military action might be a (remote) possibility.⁵⁵⁰ Afghanistan has also settled down by then, and at the very highest levels – Blair & confidantes – the British government was considering the Iraq problem. This thinking was mostly limited to the British military: whatever planning the Americans were doing at Tampa was compartmentalized and British citizens stationed at Tampa were in the foreign exclusion category for Iraq.⁵⁵¹ Likewise, Lieutenant General Anthony Pigott, then Deputy Chief of the Defence Staff, and Desmond Bowen, then the Director General for Operational Policy of the Defence Ministry, did not see any concrete change of American thinking in terms of military planning on Iraq yet.⁵⁵² April was also when the three-star in Tampa was replaced with two-star officer David Wilson, with a three-star officer 'warned-off in readiness', a sign that there were no formal American-British talks going on.⁵⁵³

⁵⁴³

⁵⁴⁴ Brian Burridge and Robin Brims, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009," 2009, 2-3.

⁵⁴⁵ Ibid., 3.

⁵⁴⁶ Tebbit and Boyce, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 3 December 2009", 4-5.

⁵⁴⁷ Ibid., 6-8.

⁵⁴⁸ Ibid., 7-8.

⁵⁴⁹ Ibid., 5.

⁵⁵⁰ Ibid., 11.

Tebbit, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 3 February 2010", 47.

Pigott, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 4 December 2009", 17-18.

⁵⁵¹ Wilson, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 4 December 2009", 8-9.

⁵⁵² Pigott, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 4 December 2009", 6-7.

⁵⁵³ Burridge and Brims, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 3.

Internally, by contrast, the United Kingdom put together a small planning cell after Crawford. This so-called 'Pigott Group' included the full Chiefs of Staff.⁵⁵⁴ Its goal was to do some scoping work.⁵⁵⁵ The operational headquarters of the single services also had small groups of people looking into Iraq in June 2002.⁵⁵⁶ Resources and Plans were asked to give broad cost estimates of the potential force packages, and it would have probably been around May 2002 that Defence Secretary Hoon was brought up to speed on this preliminary exercise.⁵⁵⁷

Events moved quite quickly. In May 2002, CENTCOM commander Tommy Franks made clear to the British Chiefs of Staff that he assessed Iraq had become a matter of 'if not when'.⁵⁵⁸ It also became clear then that the Pentagon was aiming for early 2003, which surprised the British military audience, as Franks had indicated earlier that the American forces would need 18 months to fully recuperate from Afghanistan.⁵⁵⁹ In late June 2002, the American planning opened up to the British, immediately before Pigott visited Central Command again on the 28th.⁵⁶⁰ Informal discussions between London and Tampa took place.⁵⁶¹ The Prime Minister and Manning were aware of these discussions and asked what the options were.⁵⁶² At this point, the military only discussed options, no concrete plans, as the higher level political intent was still unclear.⁵⁶³ That said, and although British negotiators, politicians and civil servants often and repeated stressed the conditions to and conditionality of British participation, there was a widespread feeling on the American side that the British would support them (as Blair, optimistically, had pretty much assured them).⁵⁶⁴

In Chief of Defence Staff Boyce's view, this was certainly true for the American military: 'There was a huge reluctance by the Americans throughout the period of July [2002] through to March 17th, 2003, to accept that we were not going to commit our forces unless they

⁵⁵⁴ Tebbit and Boyce, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 3 December 2009", 11, 47.

⁵⁵⁵ Pigott, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 4 December 2009", 17, 25.

Tebbit and Boyce, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 3 December 2009", 5.

Mann, McKane, and Woolley, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 July 2010", 16.

⁵⁵⁶ Burridge and Brims, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 6-7.

⁵⁵⁷ Tebbit and Boyce, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 3 December 2009", 18.

Mann, McKane, and Woolley, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 July 2010", 16.

⁵⁵⁸ Burridge and Brims, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 6.

⁵⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁵⁶⁰ Tebbit and Boyce, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 3 December 2009", 16-17.

Wilson, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 4 December 2009", 9.

Bowen, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 7 December 2009", 6-7.

McKane, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 19 January 2011", 50.

⁵⁶¹ Wilson, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 4 December 2009." *11.

⁵⁶² Tebbit and Boyce, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 3 December 2009", 24.

⁵⁶³ Pigott, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 4 December 2009." 18-19.

⁵⁶⁴ Tebbit and Boyce, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 3 December 2009", 19-20, 61.

agreed ... to go through the United Nations process and ... Parliament as well.’⁵⁶⁵ ‘They just did not believe it, because they did not want to and it wasn’t really until about March [2003] that Rumsfeld finally got it ... and he had that outburst saying, ‘If you don’t want to come, we will do it on our own’ ... that’s when they realised the truth.’⁵⁶⁶

Air Chief Marshall Burridge (then Air Marshal), commander in the field during the invasion, disagrees with that assessment. He has said that between himself and Franks, there was no lack of clarity that British participation was conditional: ‘It wasn’t a matter of him winking at me and saying, yes, but we know you will be there on the day. It was absolutely clear that the [United Kingdom] had a view about the process that needed to be gone through.’⁵⁶⁷ Either way it probably depends on whom you were speaking too; the one thing everyone agrees on is that the American side of the planning was marred by a multitude of competing views and forces throughout.⁵⁶⁸

August 2002 to November 2002: Making plans

By July 2002, General Franks had developed the concept for a plan for Iraq, going through the North, which he had started working on as early as November 2001 (London did not know at the time).⁵⁶⁹ In August 2002, the military’s representatives attended the two-day CENTCOM Commander’s Conference.⁵⁷⁰ The British gave an early commentary on American preparations, lauding them while also making clear that it was too early for any form of commitments.⁵⁷¹ Around this time, the British also ‘floated the notion that if everything was to fall into place ... we might be able to make a contribution there [in the north]’.⁵⁷² In any case, planning was still so provisional that it was still quite early for actual negotiations, conditions and commitments; but the first impression the British got from the Americans was ‘relief and assurance from them’.⁵⁷³ The Americans also showed they would appreciate some of the British ‘military thinking power’ – ‘and then we all rushed off for hamburgers’.⁵⁷⁴

⁵⁶⁵ Ibid., 19-20.

⁵⁶⁶ Ibid., 61.

⁵⁶⁷ Burridge and Brims, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009”, 9, 24, 32.

⁵⁶⁸ Tebbit and Boyce, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 3 December 2009”, 27, 57, 59.

⁵⁶⁹ Wilson, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 4 December 2009”, 19-22.

⁵⁷⁰ Ibid., 10.

⁵⁷¹ Ibid., 12-13, 25, 36-37.

⁵⁷² Ibid., 29.

(I am not sure if this was during the Commander’s Conference itself, but it was around the same time: 2 August 2002.)

⁵⁷³ Ibid., 15.

⁵⁷⁴ Ibid., 14-15.

In September 2002 – as President Bush agreed to the United Nations route – the planning process shifts to a higher gear throughout Whitehall: this was the moment at which other departments started planning for the possibility of war, albeit initially without much clarity as to either the likelihood or timing of any conflict.⁵⁷⁵ However, the military advice to the Prime Minister on the options and military planning itself were still not very concrete, because the planning was still small and closed off.⁵⁷⁶ From a political point of view, it was important for London not to be seen to be preparing for war. From a military point of view, this was deeply frustrating, as Lord Boyce was ‘not allowed’ ‘to get on with the work that I needed to be doing at this stage’.⁵⁷⁷

The British forces were planning for the third and biggest option – the contribution of an entire division – even though the expectation at this point was to contribute at best a brigade (the second option).⁵⁷⁸ They were planning for the third option because it was the most difficult one to deliver; if it prepared for the third option, the military would be able to deliver the others if so asked.⁵⁷⁹ However, this third option was not exposed or offered to Washington yet.⁵⁸⁰ The most likely reason is that London was not sure that it could deliver the big option, both because of concerns over the concurrent Operation Fresco (in which the military was kept in reserve to step in for the firefighting brigades as they went on strike) and because a timing of early 2003 seemed too early to be doable for the British forces, which were structured to need a 6-month lead-in time to an operation on that scale.⁵⁸¹

In October 2002, Brian Burrridge, the three-star warned-off in readiness since April 2002, was designated as the British national contingent commander for any operations that might take place in Iraq – still probably package 2.⁵⁸² He received briefings by the American State Department about the work that they had been preparing about Phase IV (the post-invasion phase).⁵⁸³ This was reassuring at the time, although it later turned out to be a false reassurance when responsibility for Phase IV moved to the Pentagon in January 2003 and

⁵⁷⁵ Tebbit and Boyce, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 3 December 2009”, 33.

Carolyn Miller, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 21 July 2010,” 2010, 3-4.

Jay, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 30 June 2010”, 5.

⁵⁷⁶ Tebbit and Boyce, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 3 December 2009”, 24.

⁵⁷⁷ Ibid., 24, 34.

⁵⁷⁸ Tebbit and Boyce, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 3 December 2009”, 35-36, 49.

⁵⁷⁹ Ibid., 35, 49.

⁵⁸⁰ Ibid., 36.

Burrridge and Brims, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009”, 22.

Wilson, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 4 December 2009”, 34.

⁵⁸¹ Watkins, “Letter to David Manning: ‘Iraq: Military Planning.’”

⁵⁸² Burrridge and Brims, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009”, 3, 22.

⁵⁸³ Ibid., 36-37.

none of the preparatory work moved with it.⁵⁸⁴ Resources and Plans started to get its first series of permissions to spend on UORs (urgent operational requirements): first £150 million, then another £150 million, and then £200 million.⁵⁸⁵ Not all UORs could be processed though: of the first batch of requirements, four out of 16 had to be held back by Defence Secretary Hoon for political reasons.⁵⁸⁶ Also in the autumn of 2002, Tim Cross was made the (provisional) two-star Joint Force Logistics Component Commander and began building provisional headquarters.⁵⁸⁷

In November 2002, after Security Council Resolution 1441 had been passed, the Ministry of Defence got permission to 'go totally overt and get on with starting implementing the planning'.⁵⁸⁸ November was also the time when planning teams at Tampa were trying to figure out whether Turkey would allow passage through its country, but visiting Chief of the Turkish General Staff Ozkok maintained that it would depend on the outcome of the 3 November elections.⁵⁸⁹ Meanwhile, US headquarters started moving from Tampa to Qatar – a process that involves a lot of flying to and from, with staff working from both places – which meant that 'half the brain power, the military planning intellectual capability' and most of the planning moved to the Middle East.⁵⁹⁰ The Americans also now made a formal request for a division-sized contribution, although there was no clear British decision on the matter yet.⁵⁹¹

December 2002 to January 2003: The move to the Southern Option

In December 2002, American and British forces did exercise Internal Look, a two-week-long full-scale Command Headquarters rehearsal in Qatar.⁵⁹² The exercise allowed them to join up their command and go through three scenarios for the war-fighting phase: complete and early collapse of the regime; a sequential domino-collapse; and a drawing together of Iraqi troops in the capital leading to a Fortress Baghdad.⁵⁹³ Also at the end of 2002, London started considering a contribution through the south, although it was not until early January 2003 that Ankara gave London a definitive nay and Lieutenant General Brims was instructed to

⁵⁸⁴ Ibid., 37.

⁵⁸⁵ Mann, McKane, and Woolley, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 July 2010", 16, 34-35.

⁵⁸⁶ Tebbit, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 3 February 2010", 18-19.

⁵⁸⁷ Cross, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry: 'Post-Invasion Iraq: The Planning and the Reality After the Invasion From Mid-2002 to the End of August 2003.'", 4.

⁵⁸⁸ Tebbit and Boyce, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 3 December 2009", 46.

⁵⁸⁹ Wilson, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 4 December 2009", 30.

⁵⁹⁰ Ibid., 32.

⁵⁹¹ Tebbit and Boyce, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 3 December 2009", 47, 91.

⁵⁹² Ibid., 66.

Burridge and Brims, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 5, 9-10.

⁵⁹³ Ibid., 10.

plan for the Southern Option.⁵⁹⁴ The American Fourth Division of the United States still planned on going through the north.⁵⁹⁵ It stayed in the north until right *after* the invasion actually started, which is why the British contribution in the south ended up being much more crucial than would have been envisaged otherwise.⁵⁹⁶

January 2003 to March 2003: What have we not done yet?

In January most of the important decisions were being finalized. In his estimate, Brims identified the lack of plans and resources for the south for Phase IV; what happened after he flagged up this problem he did not know.⁵⁹⁷ On 8 January, the British decision for the southern route was finalized.⁵⁹⁸ The exact timeline was still somewhat unclear. In the middle of January, there was a ministerial meeting in which the politicians approved of the plans, 'subject still to questions of clarifying the legal basis, to questions on how, after the initial event, things would be managed, and, of course, it was still contingent on the political decision'.⁵⁹⁹ The actual, official package of the third option came out on 20 January 2003.⁶⁰⁰

With regard to that aftermath, only in January 2003 did the Permanent Joint Headquarters 'set up a cell, a planning cell, to engage with CENTCOM on the planning of the aftermath, of Phase [IV]'.⁶⁰¹ It had not really been possible to do it earlier in any detail because London had no idea of where in Iraq it would end up.⁶⁰² Detailed Phase IV planning then started only two months before the invasion. The United States was not doing much better: the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA), was only created via a Presidential Directive on 20 January 2003 and this was done in reaction to a lack of preparation by CENTCOM.⁶⁰³ Crucially, as far as the (British) military was concerned, the Phase IV – and last phase – they needed to plan for was 'the military phase where they are in charge and *before*

⁵⁹⁴ Ibid., 50, 55.

Burridge and Brims, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 16-17.

⁵⁹⁵ Tebbit and Boyce, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 3 December 2009", 50-51.

⁵⁹⁶ Ibid., 50-51, 63-64.

Burridge and Brims, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 29-32.

⁵⁹⁷ Ibid., 49.

⁵⁹⁸ Tebbit and Boyce, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 3 December 2009", 91-92.

⁵⁹⁹ Ibid., 96, 114-115.

⁶⁰⁰ Ibid., 91.

⁶⁰¹ Bowen, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 7 December 2009", 25.

⁶⁰² Tebbit and Boyce, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 3 December 2009", 103.

⁶⁰³ Cross, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry: 'Post-Invasion Iraq: The Planning and the Reality After the Invasion From Mid-2002 to the End of August 2003.'", 7.
Feith, *War and Decision*, 349.

civilian administration comes back into the frame' (my emphasis).⁶⁰⁴ As we will see later, they expected the civilians in Iraq much earlier than the civilians expected to be there.

In February, more cracks were appearing. BurrIDGE and Franks put their headquarters side by side from 7 February 2003 on.⁶⁰⁵ There was a rock-drill from 20-22 February 2003 for the aftermath. MoD's Tim Cross and FCO's Dominick Chilcott were both present.⁶⁰⁶ To Cross, the rock-drill made 'abundantly clear that there was no agreed strategic plan ... [and] virtually no political direction as to what post-war Iraq was to look like ... no declared End-State; no Campaign Plan'.⁶⁰⁷ In more delicate words: 'Collectively it was agreed that the post-war planning was at best limited'.⁶⁰⁸ Not only were there lots of gaps in the Phase IV plan; it also seemed to Cross that that Garner was not at liberty to build a genuinely diverse team including people outside the neo-con paradigm.⁶⁰⁹ When he actually managed to find someone with relevant expertise and thinking – Tom Warrick – he was fired almost immediately on Pentagon orders.⁶¹⁰ This was particularly problematic because the neo-con paradigm included no need for post-'liberation' planning at all.⁶¹¹ It was also clear that the United Nations 'was seen virtually unanimously as a side-issue'.⁶¹²

March 2003 was mainly a political thriller. The military was deploying, remaining somewhat unsure of the time of a potential conflict until the very last moment – and, of course, still not sure that war would happen, as it depended on the political drama that was playing out. On the eve of war, commander Robin Brims judged that his troops were ready (this is a bottom-up process with all commanders on the ground signalling up that their units are ready).⁶¹³ Partly, this judgement depended on the (correct) assessment that the enemy was not particularly strong.⁶¹⁴ The shortfalls in preparation time, then, were 'not operationally significant' in the words of Kevin Tebbit.⁶¹⁵ Moreover, while more time to train was one desirable element, there was also a risk of the troops in Kuwait being sitting ducks for a WMD

⁶⁰⁴ Bowen, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 7 December 2009", 25.

⁶⁰⁵ BurrIDGE and Brims, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 5.

⁶⁰⁶ Cross, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry: 'Post-Invasion Iraq: The Planning and the Reality After the Invasion From Mid-2002 to the End of August 2003.'", 10.

⁶⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁶⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁶⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 10-13.

⁶¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 10.

Feith, *War and Decision*, 377-379.

⁶¹¹ Tebbit and Boyce, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 3 December 2009", 62, 108, 109-110.

Cross, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry: 'Post-Invasion Iraq: The Planning and the Reality After the Invasion From Mid-2002 to the End of August 2003.'", 14.

⁶¹² *Ibid.*, 13.

⁶¹³ BurrIDGE and Brims, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 17-21.

⁶¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 21-22.

⁶¹⁵ Tebbit, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 3 February 2010", 28.

attack.⁶¹⁶ In March, therefore, the United Kingdom military judged itself ready for and went to war.

Plans

Phase III: Plans for military action

From 1003 Operational Plan to the 5-Front Plan

General Franks had been invited to produce a concept for military action in Iraq as early as November 2001.⁶¹⁷ The 1003 operational plan for Iraq had not been considered in detail or updated since 'Desert Badger'⁶¹⁸, which was a plan of action if an American aircraft were shot down patrolling the No-Fly Zones.⁶¹⁹ It was based on the Powell doctrine of optimum force.⁶²⁰ Rumsfeld, who did not subscribe to this doctrine, ordered General Franks to come up with a plan that needed less – much less – boots on the ground.⁶²¹ The scenarios that Franks considered all had regime change coupled with WMD removal as their end-state. He considered three scenarios: one in which all the 'enablers fell into place', which meant that all countries that were needed to provide support (for staging, basing, and overflight...) would give that support; a reduced option where he did not get all of that; and a worst-case option

⁶¹⁶ BurrIDGE and Brims, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 18*19.

⁶¹⁷ Wilson, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 4 December 2009", 17-18.

⁶¹⁸ The plan is not well-known and quite contentious, because it seems to have included the possibility of an escalatory attack on Iraq and potentially over time had morphed into a more substantial plan to attack Iraq even before 9/11. Too much need not necessarily be read into this, for the reasons related to the nature of military planning described in an earlier section. Either way, what is relevant here is that the plan was disapproved of by Rumsfeld because it followed the Powell doctrine of optimum force.

"CNN Live Today: New Details Emerging From Early in the White House About Plans to Attack Iraq," *Cable News Network*, March 31, 2004, <http://edition.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0403/31/lt.01.html>.

"American Morning: Early War Plan; Interview With Representative Gregory Meeks," *Cable News Network*, March 31, 2004, <http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0403/31/lm.03.html>.

⁶¹⁹ Wilson, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 4 December 2009", 17-18.

⁶²⁰ *Ibid.*, 17-18.

For a brief introduction to, and discussion on, the Weinberger-Powell doctrine, see Jeffrey Record, "Back to the Weinberger-Powell Doctrine?," *Strategic Studies Quarterly* 1 (Fall) (2007): 79-95.

⁶²¹ Some books give a slightly different version of events, notably of the relationship between Franks and Rumsfeld. See for example Aiden Warren, *Prevention, Pre-Emption and the Nuclear Option: From Bush to Obama* (New York: Routledge, 2012).

For a general overview of the military transformation agenda, see

Paul K. Davis, "Military Transformation? Which Transformation, and What Lies Ahead?," in *The George W. Bush Defense Program: Policy, Strategy, and War*, ed. Stephen J. Cimbala (Dulles: Potomac Books, 2010), https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/reprints/2010/RAND_RP1413.pdf.

where he did not get any of that.⁶²² These scenarios and provisional plans were done by the end of July 2002, morphing into the first big plan called 'Generated Start'.⁶²³

Generated Start involved a gradual build-up and force levels that were significantly higher than what the United States eventually ended up with. It had a five-front approach: special forces in the west; preventing the enemy from going up north; main entry in the south through; an air component; and an information war to disguise Western intentions.⁶²⁴ Later, the US Fourth Infantry Division was added in the north in addition to special operational forces.⁶²⁵ The slow troop build-up of some 90 days posed risks if Iraq were to use chemical and biological weapons. An alternative American plan, 'Running Start', was therefore added to the options.⁶²⁶ Later plans involved elements of both plans: a quicker deployment than Generated Start, a short air campaign and Special Forces operations, and going in with boots on the ground. The risks with this plan included both 'disastrous success' – an immediate or early collapse of the regime – and the nightmare of a Fortress Baghdad with immense civilian losses.

Envisaged British Contribution to the North Plan

By that time military planning opened up to the UK, the plan on the table involved the US Fourth Division going through the north, based on a dormant NATO plan that had been 'dusted off and reshaped'.⁶²⁷ This 'North option' had a strong south component going through Kuwait but the British contribution would have been in the north.⁶²⁸ There seems to have been no particular reasons for the British to contribute in the north – rather, it was suggested during the CENTCOM Conference and firmed up in the aftermath – but there were a few good arguments for it.⁶²⁹ It would allow Britain to play a role in protecting the Kurds.⁶³⁰ They already had Northern Fly Zone experience, and of course the northern oil fields were very vulnerable.⁶³¹ Moreover, the British units that were considered – of First Armoured Division – were most compatible with the Fourth Division that was scheduled to go through Turkey.⁶³²

⁶²² Wilson, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 4 December 2009", 18-19.

⁶²³ Ibid., 22, 26-27.

⁶²⁴ Ibid., 26-27.

⁶²⁵ Ibid., 28.

⁶²⁶ Warren, *Prevention, Pre-Emption and the Nuclear Option: From Bush to Obama*, 43.

⁶²⁷ Tebbit and Boyce, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 3 December 2009", 50.

⁶²⁸ Ibid., 22-23, 51.

⁶²⁹ Wilson, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 4 December 2009", 30-31.

⁶³⁰ Tebbit and Boyce, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 3 December 2009", 51-53.

⁶³¹ Ibid., 51-53.

⁶³² Ibid., 53.

It was also a shorter sea route and in any case Kuwait was quite a small area from which to insert a large number of troops into Iraq.⁶³³

From the first internal British planning in April 2002, three options were on the table.⁶³⁴ Their content varied somewhat over time, but essentially the first one was to give the United States some enablers, but nothing much beyond what London had in theatre anyhow, largely Special Forces and some naval forces.⁶³⁵ This force could have been generated in days and it went without saying that Britain would have at the very least given its 'Special Relationship' partner this support.⁶³⁶ The second option, about brigade strength, would also have been in a support role, but the political decision to support the Americans would have been significant.⁶³⁷ The third option was a division with a full combat role.⁶³⁸ Such a force would take months to generate – six following the Strategic Defence Review, although even the Review did not foresee the generation of a full land division at a point at which Britain was already engaged elsewhere (Afghanistan).⁶³⁹

As said in the last section, initially the British expected to contribute the second option.⁶⁴⁰ When this was offered, it was received 'with gratitude'.⁶⁴¹ However, there were strong factors for bringing a bigger contribution.⁶⁴² First and foremost on the military mind was the influence this would bring to the table. Boyce names this as the rationale for the third option; Permanent Secretary Tebbit expands on this.⁶⁴³ To him the lesson of the first Gulf War was that boots on the ground were needed to have serious influence on American planning; once London committed back in 1990 'the planning process opened up completely to us and we were able to influence it'.⁶⁴⁴ Furthermore, the ethical case that pervaded the political reasoning behind the policy applied to the military options as well: they were dealing with a

⁶³³ Tebbit and Boyce, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 3 December 2009", 54.

Burridge and Brims, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 14.

⁶³⁴ Tebbit and Boyce, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 3 December 2009", 12.

Watkins, "Letter to Matthew Rycroft: 'Iraq'."

⁶³⁵ Tebbit and Boyce, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 3 December 2009", 12.

⁶³⁶ Ibid., 12.

⁶³⁷ Ibid., 12.

⁶³⁸ Ibid., 12.

⁶³⁹ Ibid., 17, 40.

⁶⁴⁰ Pigott, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 4 December 2009", 48.

Wilson, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 4 December 2009", 34.

⁶⁴¹ Ibid., 34.

⁶⁴² Tebbit, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 3 February 2010", 39-41.

Tebbit and Boyce, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 3 December 2009", 26, 38, 40, 45-46.

Pigott, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 4 December 2009", 49-50.

⁶⁴³ Tebbit and Boyce, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 3 December 2009", 26, 38, 46.

Pigott, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 4 December 2009." 49-50.

⁶⁴⁴ Tebbit and Boyce, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 3 December 2009", 46.

vital problem that was the responsibility of the international community as a whole, so Britain should play a full part.⁶⁴⁵ In the end, therefore, London offered the third option when it was practically feasible.⁶⁴⁶

Another effect of this was 'that having something on a large-scale size would allow us, as it actually happened, to take over a region of the country rather than being integrated with the American force in the aftermath process, which is how we finished up with south-eastern Iraq'.⁶⁴⁷ The implicit assumption that this was something worth striving for will be taken up in a later section on the Ministry of Defence; the lack of preparation for this region London ended up with will also be taken up later. Another, more general effect of contributing a full division was thought to be its general, positive influence on American-British military/military cooperation, 'good for future links on future operations, it's good for sharing intelligence, it helps with logistics.'⁶⁴⁸

South Plan

As we know, getting Turkey's cooperation proved unfeasible and the plan was switched to go completely through the south.⁶⁴⁹ The switch caused fewer problems than one might have feared: the operational concept was more or less the same and planning until then had been fairly generic.⁶⁵⁰ There was also a good working relationship between Brims, who was commanding the UK 1 Armoured Division, and Franks.⁶⁵¹ The American was very responsive and accommodating with regard to the extra support that the United Kingdom needed to come through the South in time.⁶⁵² Perhaps somewhat ironically, it was an American part of the force – the Fourth – that was stuck in the North on the eve of the invasion.⁶⁵³ Some of the British ships had left for Iraq literally not knowing which way they were going to sail when they set off, but overall the switch worked quite well.⁶⁵⁴

Going through the South certainly had advantages, with notably shorter supply lines, which simplified logistical considerations.⁶⁵⁵ However, the fact that it was more crowded made it

⁶⁴⁵ Ibid., 40.

⁶⁴⁶ Tebbit, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 3 February 2010", 39-40.

⁶⁴⁷ Tebbit and Boyce, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 3 December 2009", 45.

⁶⁴⁸ Pigott, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 4 December 2009", 49-50.

⁶⁴⁹ Tebbit and Boyce, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 3 December 2009", 22-23.

⁶⁵⁰ Burrige and Brims, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 26-27.

⁶⁵¹ Ibid., 26-27.

⁶⁵² Ibid., 30.

Michael Boyce, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry," January 7, 2011, 1.

⁶⁵³ Tebbit and Boyce, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 3 December 2009", 50-51.

⁶⁵⁴ Burrige and Brims, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 15.

⁶⁵⁵ Ibid., 15.

more difficult to base all the aircraft (not just for ramp space, but also for the distribution of fuel for example).⁶⁵⁶ The most important differences lay in what would happen once the troops had entered Iraq.⁶⁵⁷ The South route gave the United Kingdom the prospect of a defined British 'box', as its troops would stay behind while the American troops would push on to Bagdad.⁶⁵⁸ This meant that British troops would immediately arrive where they were supposed to end up, and Phase IV would effectively start at the same time as Phase III (war-fighting).⁶⁵⁹ The 'box' also meant less complexity of manoeuvre and more autonomy from the Pentagon.⁶⁶⁰ This British also hoped this meant that the United Kingdom 'could set our own destiny in terms of setting the tone in that part of Iraq'.⁶⁶¹

Phase IV: Plans for the aftermath

American Planning for Phase IV

American planning for Phase IV is a major topic in and of itself. In broad terms: the State Department had initially been responsible for Phase IV planning. It had relevant experience and put a lot of effort into preparing work streams that covered a wide range of issues, although this preparation remained quite conceptual.⁶⁶² The State Department also shared many of the British concerns and priorities, including the need for wide international support and a solid plan for after the invasion.⁶⁶³ However, the State Department was fighting a losing battle for influence within Washington.⁶⁶⁴ The entire responsibility for the Iraq project was eventually won by the Pentagon, and all preparation – including for the aftermath – went there in the first week of January 2003.⁶⁶⁵ It was put under the responsibility of a retired general, and none of State's preparation moved with the responsibility.⁶⁶⁶

⁶⁵⁶ Ibid., 15.

⁶⁵⁷ Ibid., 15-16.

⁶⁵⁸ Ibid., 15.

⁶⁵⁹ Ibid., 16.

⁶⁶⁰ Ibid., 15-16, 27.

⁶⁶¹ Ibid., 15.

⁶⁶² Ibid., 36-37.

Miller, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 21 July 2010", 8.

⁶⁶³ Tebbit and Boyce, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 3 December 2009", 57.

⁶⁶⁴ Ibid., 57, 62.

Chakrabarti, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 16,

Cross, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry: 'Post-Invasion Iraq: The Planning and the Reality After the Invasion From Mid-2002 to the End of August 2003.'", 5.

⁶⁶⁵ Burrige and Brims, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 37.

Tebbit and Boyce, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 3 December 2009", 108, 110-111.

Cross, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry: 'Post-Invasion Iraq: The Planning and the Reality After the Invasion From Mid-2002 to the End of August 2003.'", 14.

Manning, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 30 November 2009", 68.

⁶⁶⁶ Burrige and Brims, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 37.

For the Pentagon, preparation for the aftermath was very much an afterthought. The paradigm that dominated thinking was a neo-conservative one which held that the Iraqis wanted a liberal democracy and would grasp the opportunity with both hands as soon they would be given a chance.⁶⁶⁷ All America needed to do, then, was provide that chance by deposing Saddam Hussein and dismantling any WMD programs. In this world view, the United Nations was also very much a hassle and imposition to be avoided.⁶⁶⁸ As described in an earlier section, this 'plan' that no plan is needed also meant that planning started but two months before the invasion and was done by very few people (about 100 staff members).⁶⁶⁹ As a result, ORHA was a disaster and the good cooperation, resources and plans never materialized: 'they were understaffed, underfunded and ... they had profound ... difficulties with the clarity of their mission'.⁶⁷⁰

British Plans for the Aftermath

Of course, the British military had also considered the aftermath. One bold military claim, made by Boyce and echoed by Tebbit, is that '[w]e spent as many hours working on our Phase 4, on aftermath planning, as we did actually on the actual main battle plan of winning the war'.⁶⁷¹ It is important to have a sense of what the military expected itself to do, though.⁶⁷² It was quite clear that the military campaign can only be part of the plan if the political end-goal is to put Iraq back into the world community.⁶⁷³ Such 'a big strategic [goal is] way beyond ... the ... planning capability of CENTCOM or London or anywhere else'.⁶⁷⁴ The military expected to go in, topple Saddam to find the weapons of mass destruction, and hold the ground while civilians came in and start getting on with their part of the job, which is reconstruction and the thousands of non-military things, economic, political, financial,

Tebbit and Boyce, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 3 December 2009", 107-108.

Chakrabarti, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 21-22.

Manning, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 30 November 2009", 68.

⁶⁶⁷ Tebbit and Boyce, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 3 December 2009", 62, 107-108, 110-111.

Cross, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry: 'Post-Invasion Iraq: The Planning and the Reality After the Invasion From Mid-2002 to the End of August 2003.'", 6, 14.

⁶⁶⁸ Ibid., 13.

⁶⁶⁹ Ibid., 11-13.

⁶⁷⁰ Tebbit and Boyce, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 3 December 2009", 100, 114.

Wilson, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 4 December 2009", 43.

⁶⁷¹ Tebbit and Boyce, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 3 December 2009", 98-99.

⁶⁷² Cross, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry: 'Post-Invasion Iraq: The Planning and the Reality After the Invasion From Mid-2002 to the End of August 2003.'", 6.

⁶⁷³ Pigott, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 4 December 2009", 53-55.

⁶⁷⁴ Ibid., 54.

humanitarian, monetary, social, judicial, that need to be solved to bring a state back on track.⁶⁷⁵

It took the British a while to fully understand the lack of planning across the ocean, especially after the move from the State Department to the Pentagon.⁶⁷⁶ There was a feeling that there must be more to the planning than it seemed; surely the United States would not believe they could invade a country and expect to go to a flourishing democracy overnight?⁶⁷⁷ This initial lack of understanding was probably made worse as American interlocutors frequently agreed with the British concerns that were voiced.⁶⁷⁸ The State Department most certainly agreed, but so did many of the military men. In the eyes of the British dealing with him, General Franks understood the need for proper aftermath planning exceedingly well. 'No question about that whatsoever. ... He certainly understood the sequencing that should happen ... and he understood the need to have the resources available and the need for security and the relationship between reconstruction, humanitarian assistance, disposable funds and security, civil action', but assumed there would be a task force to take care of this.⁶⁷⁹

However, as time went on, and in particular from February 2003 on, it was plain to all involved that Washington did not have any preparation for Phase IV to speak of.⁶⁸⁰ Most fundamentally, the Defence Secretary seemed to think that, as the liberators would not need to do anything in post-war Iraq, there was no need to send substantial amount of troops.⁶⁸¹ The US Armed Forces had asked for more troops but were refused.⁶⁸² Their British partners felt confident that they had enough people to pull off their own area of operation, but were 'extremely concerned about the anorexic nature of the American contribution', which was

⁶⁷⁵ Tebbit and Boyce, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 3 December 2009", 79, 100, 105-107, 114.

Pigott, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 4 December 2009", 55.

Chakrabarti, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 38.

Stephen Pattison, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry," January 2011, 13.

Cross, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry: 'Post-Invasion Iraq: The Planning and the Reality After the Invasion From Mid-2002 to the End of August 2003.'", 6.

By contrast, DFID expected the military to be doing many more things in Phase IV that it was not necessarily prepared for: Short, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 February 2010", 14, 61.

⁶⁷⁶ Burridge and Brims, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 36-37.

Tebbit and Boyce, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 3 December 2009", 107.

Cross, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry: 'Post-Invasion Iraq: The Planning and the Reality After the Invasion From Mid-2002 to the End of August 2003.'", 13.

⁶⁷⁷ Ibid., 13.

⁶⁷⁸ Tebbit and Boyce, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 3 December 2009", 57, 62.

Pigott, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 4 December 2009", 51.

⁶⁷⁹ Wilson, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 4 December 2009", 39-40.

⁶⁸⁰ Tebbit and Boyce, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 3 December 2009", 112-113.

Cross, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry: 'Post-Invasion Iraq: The Planning and the Reality After the Invasion From Mid-2002 to the End of August 2003.'", 6, 10-11, 13.

⁶⁸¹ Tebbit and Boyce, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 3 December 2009", 100.

⁶⁸² Ibid., 112.

'desperately under-resourced'.⁶⁸³ They were also aware that serious Phase IV-planning was rebuffed by the inner circles of the Pentagon (or, if you ask Feith, by CENTCOM), and that ORHA was a shambles.⁶⁸⁴ These concerns were communicated up the chain of responsibility, and it was clear that efforts were done to address these issues with the United States.⁶⁸⁵ However, this did not help and after that the concerns seemingly vanished from the agenda and did not change the course of British policy in any substantial way.

Assumptions

Assumptions underlie every thought process, every policy, and every plan. Many of these assumptions are reasonable assumptions to hold; some are not; some are important; some are not. In the case of the British preparation for a possible invasion of Iraq, some of the most fundamental assumptions underpinning departmental policies were proved right. The relative weakness of the Iraqi forces is an obvious example.⁶⁸⁶ Some assumptions were proved wrong, but not harmful overall: Iraq's weapons of mass destruction and the expectation of humanitarian disaster are examples.⁶⁸⁷ Other assumptions, however, were crucially important. They needed to be correct if Iraq policy was to be successful; but they turned out badly, for a variety of reasons discussed more fully in chapter five. These assumptions will be highlighted in this section. I do not want to suggest that these could have been foreseen or even that these assumptions were unique to or stemmed only from the military (for the money, for instance, the Treasury played a key role); but they did all underlie the military plans.

"We will not 'trash the joint' and we will keep the army and existing infrastructure"

It was clear to everyone that the goal in Iraq was rather bigger than an easy military victory and leaving the country. The goal was a changed country, ideally a democratic one that

⁶⁸³ Ibid., 100.

⁶⁸⁴ Cross, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry: 'Post-Invasion Iraq: The Planning and the Reality After the Invasion From Mid-2002 to the End of August 2003.'", 5-7.

Wilson, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 4 December 2009", 40.

Feith, *War and Decision*, 292.

⁶⁸⁵ Ibid., 42.

Tebbit and Boyce, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 3 December 2009", 32, 39, 61, 103-104, 112

Cross, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry: 'Post-Invasion Iraq: The Planning and the Reality After the Invasion From Mid-2002 to the End of August 2003.'", 6.

Burridge and Brims, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 49-50.

⁶⁸⁶ Ibid., 21-22, 40.

⁶⁸⁷ Ibid., 18-19.

Tebbit and Boyce, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 3 December 2009", 98.

Short, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 February 2010", 12-13.

Chakrabarti, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 10-11.

participated in the international system. To achieve such ambitions, it was crucial for the invading force 'not to trash the joint'.⁶⁸⁸ They would also need to rely on Iraqis to achieve those goals, as it was very clear that the British would not have the people, money or will to build up a devastated country from the rubble on their own, or even with the United States.⁶⁸⁹ 'One of our great concerns', then, 'was to ensure that we retained as far as possible infrastructure and also such things as the Iraqi army'.⁶⁹⁰

"The civilians will come in and take over soon after Phase III"

British planners understood quite well that the end of Phase III was not was not the end of the military engagement in Iraq. In the words of one military commentator, when Bush declared 'Missions accomplished' in [May] 2003, '[t]he President can do what he likes, he earns more money than I do, but how could it be? It was not the end of the campaign, it was the end of a particular and not overtaxing military task to the United States armed forces'.⁶⁹¹ However, while they understood that they were not only war fighters but also peace keepers for at least a short period of time, they nevertheless expected the civilians, notably DFID, to start coming in and do their part of the job: reconstruction.⁶⁹² The military did neither plan nor budget for this.⁶⁹³ As we will see in the next section, DFID saw its own role – and budget – in a very different light.⁶⁹⁴

"Other countries will shoulder large parts of the burden"

The plans also assumed that someone else – Iraq itself, the United States, and the international community – would start picking up the bills for the reconstruction of Iraq.⁶⁹⁵

⁶⁸⁸ Tebbit and Boyce, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 3 December 2009", 99.

Burridge and Brims, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 34.

⁶⁸⁹ Pattison, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry", 9-10.

Tebbit and Boyce, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 3 December 2009", 99.

Stephen Pattison, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 31 January 2011 (Morning Session)," 2011, 79-81.

⁶⁹⁰ Tebbit and Boyce, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 3 December 2009", 99.

⁶⁹¹ Pigott, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 4 December 2009", 51-52.

⁶⁹² Pattison, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry", 13.

Cross, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry: 'Post-Invasion Iraq: The Planning and the Reality After the Invasion From Mid-2002 to the End of August 2003.'", 6.

Tebbit and Boyce, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 3 December 2009", 79, 100, 105-107, 114.

Pigott, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 4 December 2009", 55.

Chakrabarti, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 38.

⁶⁹³ Nor did the Treasury initially provide the money to do so. 'Relatively modest sums' were subsequently made available to the Ministry of Defence by the Reserve, in 2003/2004 but mainly in 2004/2005.

Mann, McKane, and Woolley, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 July 2010", 88.

⁶⁹⁴ Short, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 February 2010", 14, 61.

⁶⁹⁵ Keeble, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry", 2

Tebbit and Boyce, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 3 December 2009", 109-110.

The core budget, UORs and net additional cost of *keeping the armed forces going* were all expected and sorted out. The costs of getting *the country of Iraq* going were not. Similarly, there was a tension between Strategic Defence Review assumptions on the drawdown of British troops and what Chief of Defence Staff Boyce was expecting.⁶⁹⁶ The Defence Review assumed a drawdown to brigade level, about 8,000 troops, after six months.⁶⁹⁷ Boyce thought this was unrealistic and expected forces would be needed in Iraq for at least three or four years.⁶⁹⁸ The general expectation though was that other allies would start contributing troops after Phase III, which would allow the United Kingdom to draw down as they would come in.⁶⁹⁹ In fact, one consideration for going all-in with a big contribution in Phase III was to avoid being pressurized into a larger (and more expensive) commitment in Phase IV.⁷⁰⁰

“The UN will play a central role after the invasion”

‘We saw the UN as playing a central role’ was an assumption in the governance framework after the invasion all throughout the military planning process and underpinning the plans, even as it was clear that the United States was always less keen and usually less than keen about the prospect.⁷⁰¹ From a British point of view, the United Nations involvement was necessary for at least four reasons: it would bring the weapon inspectors back; UN involvement brings major resources as countries start contributing; to confer additional legitimacy on a contested course of action; and to provide a framework for the exit strategy, as the United Nations could guide the political processes needed to make Iraq autonomous and functioning.⁷⁰² And of course, even if the United Nations would not come in, at the very least a further Security Council Resolution would be needed to give the invaders the right to fundamentally change the country: invading forces are restricted from any substantial changes to countries’ systems.⁷⁰³

Summary: The Situation on the Eve of War

⁶⁹⁶ Ibid., 101-102, 104.

Mann, McKane, and Woolley, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 July 2010”, 5.

⁶⁹⁷ “Strategic Defence Review,” 1998, http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20121018172816/http://www.mod.uk/NR/rdonlyres/65F3D7AC-4340-4119-93A2-20825848E50E/0/sdr1998_complete.pdf, 32.

Tebbit and Boyce, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 3 December 2009”, 101.

Mann, McKane, and Woolley, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 July 2010”, 5.

⁶⁹⁸ Ibid., 27-28.

Tebbit and Boyce, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 3 December 2009”, 101.

⁶⁹⁹ Ibid., 104.

⁷⁰⁰ Watkins, “Letter to David Manning: ‘Iraq: UK Military Options.’”

⁷⁰¹ Tebbit and Boyce, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 3 December 2009”, 102.

⁷⁰² Ibid., 32, 109-110.

⁷⁰³ Chilcott, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009”, 23.

On the eve of war, the British military had managed to put together a full divisional contribution to the American effort, a feat that was outside the normal Strategic Defence Review planning assumptions. The plan was for the troops to be inserted through Kuwait after a short air campaign. One of the American units – US Fourth Infantry Division – was stuck in the north now that Turkey had refused access, which meant that the British contribution was now a major part of the initial invading force. After the invasion, the British would stay behind in the South while the Americans pushed on to Baghdad; they would also become responsible for that area around Basra.

Plans for the phase after combat were rudimentary. The general idea was that once the invasion had succeeded, the international system would start working. Other nations would then start contributing troops, allowing the British to draw down substantially. The bill for the reconstruction of Iraq would also be borne by Iraq itself, rich in oil, the United States, and the international community, with Britain doing its usual share but not being responsible on its own for the money. The military was aware it would need to keep order for a while but expected humanitarian relief and reconstruction to be managed mainly by the Department for International Development and perhaps to a lesser extent by the Foreign Office, which had the overall policy lead on Iraq.

3. DEPARTMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Planning process

Spring 2002 – September 2002: Is something happening?

As we now know, the first major post-9/11 British policy framework for Iraq was put together in March 2002 in advance of the Prime Minister's visit to Crawford. The Department for International Development was not involved in this; its Permanent Secretary Suma Chakrabarti was not even aware it was happening.⁷⁰⁴ DFID staff were neither invited to nor informed of the 23 July 2002 meeting at which military options were discussed.⁷⁰⁵ However, in the spring and summer of 2002 the DFID personnel became aware that some form of military contingency planning was taking place, although it was not informed of any details.⁷⁰⁶ Internally, the department started doing some humanitarian contingency planning.⁷⁰⁷

⁷⁰⁴ Chakrabarti, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009." 4-7.

⁷⁰⁵ Short, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 February 2010", 15.

⁷⁰⁶ Ibid., 8.

September 2002 – October 2002: Thinking about humanitarian assistance

In September 2002, the Cabinet Office set up the so-called Ad Hoc Group of Officials on Iraq, of which the Development Department was a part.⁷⁰⁸ It was the first time the department was formally involved in any Iraq discussions.⁷⁰⁹ This group brought together all relevant departments and allowed them to exchange information. DFID mainly contributed on the humanitarian side of issues, for which it was preparing extensively internally.⁷¹⁰ Humanitarian relief, of course, was one of the department's core tasks. It was a task that DFID was equipped for. It was also a task that would never be legally contentious: humanitarian aid, unlike reconstruction, is always allowed under international law.⁷¹¹ This preparation had to be kept internal, as there was a ban from Number 10 on talking to outside institutions, to not to be seen preparing for war.⁷¹² Short asked for a briefing on military developments but was rebuffed.⁷¹³ When a briefing eventually happened, it was – according to Short – soothing rather than a genuine briefing.⁷¹⁴

At this point in time, the department was not yet preparing to address the problems of reconstruction in the aftermath of the problem; perhaps because they had no clear idea of what was going on nor of the timeline involved (the general assumption was that war was quite far away, as the United Nations process would have to be fulfilled first and hopefully avoid war altogether).⁷¹⁵ The reconstruction side of things seems to have been the responsibility of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, who were in charge of the overall Iraq policy and who certainly, if somewhat accidentally, were thinking about policing and other post-invasion issues.⁷¹⁶

The ban on talking to outside institutions was problematic for a department whose working method relied on inserting money and coordinating existing other organizations; the 11

Miller, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 21 July 2010", 6.

Keeble, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry", 1.

⁷⁰⁷ Nicola Brewer, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry," September 12, 2010, 1.

⁷⁰⁸ Chakrabarti, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 9.

Brewer, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry", 1.

⁷⁰⁹ Ibid., 7.

⁷¹⁰ Miller, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 21 July 2010", 4-5.

Short, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 February 2010", 47.

Chakrabarti, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 8.

⁷¹¹ Short, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 February 2010", 86.

⁷¹² Miller, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 21 July 2010", 17.

Short, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 February 2010", 52.

Chakrabarti, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 13.

⁷¹³ Short, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 February 2010", 15-16.

⁷¹⁴ Ibid., 15-16.

⁷¹⁵ Chakrabarti, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 8.

⁷¹⁶ Miller, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 21 July 2010." 9-10.

October 2002 paper of the Ad Hoc group explicitly mentions the ban as a constraint.⁷¹⁷ Clare Short told her department to disregard that blockage as far as the United Nations was concerned.⁷¹⁸ They discovered that the United Nations was doing its own preparations, but had just as much interest in keeping that silent – and for the same reasons – as Britain.⁷¹⁹ When the ban on talking to outside organizations was lifted to a limited extent on 23 October 2002, DFID also started liaising with NGOs.⁷²⁰

November 2002 – December 2002: Signs of trouble

In November 2002 (the time when Resolution 1441 was passed), DFID representatives were part of the cross-Whitehall team that went to the United States.⁷²¹ At this point, the military was just receiving permission to start its overt planning and the first UORs were coming through. DFID started discovering what would only start to dawn in earnest on the military two months later: there was no serious post-invasion planning being done.⁷²² To be sure, DFID and its American equivalent USAID were on the same page, but USAID and the State Department had little internal pull.⁷²³ Their plans, including the State Department's document 'Future of Iraq', were also 'reasonably top level or too top level for that stage', that is lacking in detail.⁷²⁴ Overall, the British came 'back with a very clear conclusion that the people with the expertise on humanitarian assistance ... were still not being heard'.⁷²⁵

Then, in December 2002, Defence's Tim Cross came to DFID and asked for a meeting under Chatham House rules.⁷²⁶ He expressed worries that the Ministry of Defence's Permanent Joint Headquarters were not paying enough attention to the humanitarian assistance task and that the planning between the two departments was not integrated enough.⁷²⁷ His interlocutors

⁷¹⁷ Chakrabarti, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 13.

⁷¹⁸ The accusations of Sally Keeble, which seem mainly levelled at Clare Short and which include the ban, are in this instance directed at the wrong person. It was a Cabinet Ban and Clare Short in fact overruled that policy.

Sally Keeble, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 5 July 2010," 2010, 27.

Miller, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 21 July 2010", 16-17.

Short, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 February 2010", 53-56.

⁷¹⁹ Chakrabarti, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 14.

Short, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 February 2010", 53-56.

⁷²⁰ Miller, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 21 July 2010", 17-18.

Short, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 February 2010", 51-52, 56.

⁷²¹ Chakrabarti, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 15.

⁷²² Ibid., 16.

Miller, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 21 July 2010", 6-7.

⁷²³ Chakrabarti, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 16.

⁷²⁴ Democratic Principles Work Group, *Final Report On The Transition To Democracy In Iraq*, 2002.

Miller, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 21 July 2010", 8.

⁷²⁵ Chakrabarti, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 16.

⁷²⁶ Ibid., 18.

⁷²⁷ Ibid., 18.

shared his concerns, particularly their lack of understanding of the operational planning.⁷²⁸ Tim Cross asked Clare Short to write to Defence Secretary Hoon; instead Clare Short raised the issue with Tony Blair, who suggested she should talk to Boyce.⁷²⁹ Although the Prime Minister, she says, agreed that her department should have access to military planning, it took until the end up December to get this going.⁷³⁰

December 2002 is also the month in which the issue of DFID funding is also first raised with the Treasury and thereafter in 'various letters from Clare Short to the Prime Minister'.⁷³¹ Initially, the demands are met with a lot of resistance.⁷³² The Treasury expects DFID to fund Iraq out of its normal budget for humanitarian aid; and as far as reconstruction is concerned, '[t]here is no money, and that's why we have got to have a UN Resolution for reconstruction'.⁷³³ The United Nations itself launched its first appeal for £15.2 million for an emergency in Iraq, to which London looked at contributing its usual share of 5.6 percent.⁷³⁴ The United Nations appeal goals were not met, as countries around the world were not willing to pay for the potential crisis.⁷³⁵

January 2003 – March 2003: Planning, planning, planning

In the new year there was much better cooperation between MOD and DFID.⁷³⁶ It was still not clear to DFID whether war would in fact happen, though, and in any case the department assumed it had a lot more time than it actually did (and then the military would have been planning for at this stage).⁷³⁷ When it was decided that the military would go through the south rather than the north and thus take civil responsibility for four provinces, this led to an internal discussion in Short's department about the distribution of DFID's help.⁷³⁸ Given that

⁷²⁸ Ibid., 18.

⁷²⁹ Ibid., 19.

⁷³⁰ Ibid., 19, 21-22.

⁷³¹ Ibid., 28.

⁷³² Short, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 February 2010", 70-71.

⁷³³ Ibid., 72.

⁷³⁴ Original source says \$23.7 million.

Keeble, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 5 July 2010", 26.

Keeble, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry", 2

⁷³⁵ Keeble, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 5 July 2010", 26.

⁷³⁶ Also see the papers of early February

Chakrabarti, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 20.

⁷³⁷ Ibid., 21.

⁷³⁸ Sally Keeble, Parliamentary Undersecretary of State between May 2002 and June 2003, felt that this decision should have been taken earlier. By contrast, Carolyn Miller, Director for Europe, the Middle East and the Americas between 2001 and 2004, counters that the lateness of the decision was the result of unclarity about the potential second Security Council resolution and thus could not have been prevented.

Keeble, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 5 July 2010", 1, 14.

Miller, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 21 July 2010", 22-23.

DFID's mandate was to fight poverty, there was a strong case to be made for giving assistance based on need; the idea that international development assistance should be associated with the military was contentious.⁷³⁹ On the other hand, an integrated British policy made sense and would allow a better outcome in that region and in the end DFID came 'to the conclusion that [funding the British area] was a reasonably way forward'.⁷⁴⁰

Responsibility for the provinces allocated to the British meant a lot more money was needed for reconstruction. The Treasury presumed DFID would pay – like the department usually does – its activities, including all crises, from its core budget. However, the invasion Iraq did not naturally fit in the anti-poverty mandate of the department and in any case the costs were orders of magnitude bigger. This in turn also meant that the role of the United Nations would be more important. The money issue was raised over and over again with the Treasury and Number 10.⁷⁴¹ Clare Short also wrote to the Prime Minister for guidance on whether 'you want us to go for a modest or a high scenario' of delivering humanitarian aid to get a better idea of what funding the department could expect.⁷⁴² Tony Blair answered he wanted the United Kingdom to play an exemplary role.⁷⁴³

However, there was still no clarity on the amount of resources that would be made available – and Chakrabarti claims that NGOs threatened to 'go public' about the lack of funding for DFID.⁷⁴⁴ On 10 February 2003, DFID got allocated additional funding worth £3.5 million for Iraq for the first time, followed by another £6.5 million in late February: £3.5 million for the United Nations, £3 million for NGOs.⁷⁴⁵ There was no plan yet for disbursements; the assumption was that allocations would be made as needs emerged.⁷⁴⁶ In early March 2003, DFID allocated another £65 to Iraq, this time out of DFID's annual budget for contingencies for 2003/2004, depleting the contingency budget for the entire world in one go at almost the beginning of the year.⁷⁴⁷

Around the same time, the Ministry of Defence got £30 million from the treasury for post-conflict humanitarian work (£20 million in advance and £2.5 million each week for the first

Keeble, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry", 2-3.

⁷³⁹ Miller, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 21 July 2010", 19.

Keeble, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 5 July 2010", 11-14.

⁷⁴⁰ Miller, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 21 July 2010", 19.

⁷⁴¹ Chakrabarti, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 28.

Short, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 February 2010", 70-72.

⁷⁴² Chakrabarti, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 28.

⁷⁴³ *Ibid.*, 28.

⁷⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 28.

⁷⁴⁵ Keeble, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry", 2

⁷⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 2

⁷⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 2

month).⁷⁴⁸ Getting the money is one thing; injecting it into the system another. By the middle of March, £17 million of the money received by DFID had been allocated to agencies.⁷⁴⁹ By way of comparison, United Nations and British Treasury papers indicated that the total cost for post-conflict resolution might be in the region of £1,200-£2,600 million⁷⁵⁰, and the costs for the United Kingdom was estimated at perhaps £60 million per month.⁷⁵¹

If Britain was to be involved in reconstruction, a role for the United Nations was essential. Ideally, for DFID, this meant that the UN should have the leadership of the post-war effort, but at the very least it meant a resolution legalizing reconstruction.⁷⁵² However, when Carolyn Miller and the Foreign Office's Edward Chaplin went back to Washington in January 2003 to talk about the Day After, it was clear that the United States was still not keen on a role for the United Nations.⁷⁵³ As always there were clear divisions between the different parts of the American government, and State and USAID were keen for the international organization to have a role.⁷⁵⁴

However, as a whole, the American stance was not to outright deny a role for the United Nations, but to focus on having them 'deliver some things rather than a more overall role' – a pick-and-chose approach that the United Nations would be unlikely to accept.⁷⁵⁵ It was also clear that the American planning had little in it that was good, new, or substantial.⁷⁵⁶ Departmental communication to the Cabinet Secretary of 11 March, as well as a letter of 12 March, outlined the need to 'be very clear with the Americans on the need for UN leadership in the post-conflict effort'.⁷⁵⁷ In the margins of the Cabinet meeting of 13 March 2003, Clare Short got reassured by Tony Blair that this was indeed the case; she reported back to her

⁷⁴⁸ Ibid., 2

⁷⁴⁹ Ibid., 2

⁷⁵⁰ The actual source says \$1.9-4 billion; but I am a firm believer that using million and billion in the same text is confusing at best and disingenuous at worst. For the same reason, I have converted the amount from American dollars to British pounds, using the conversation date of the eve of the war. The converted numbers are rounded up to the same level of accuracy as the initial amounts, to not give the impression of more exactitude than is warranted. The website <http://www.xe.com/currencytables/?from=USD&date=2003-03-18> gives the following exchange rates for 18 March 2003, which is a slightly random but overall useful date to compare the exchange rates between American dollars and British pounds around that time: \$1 was worth £0.6401077103; £1 was worth \$1.5622370797.

Randall Munroe, "1000 Times," *XKCD*, accessed June 4, 2015, <http://xkcd.com/558/>.

⁷⁵¹ Keeble, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry", 2

⁷⁵² Chakrabarti, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 10, 35-36.

Keeble, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 5 July 2010", 14.

⁷⁵³ Miller, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 21 July 2010", 10-12.

⁷⁵⁴ Ibid., 12.

⁷⁵⁵ Ibid., 12.

⁷⁵⁶ Ibid., 11-12.

⁷⁵⁷ Chakrabarti, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 24.

department that Bush had agreed that the United Nations would be in the lead for post-conflict efforts.⁷⁵⁸

All throughout this, the department was considering what parts of the United Nations to fund, what role they should have in supporting the United Kingdom's Armed Forces, what NGOs were likely to be working immediately after the conflict, and whether to send out any people of DFID itself.⁷⁵⁹ In February, the department deployed one person to the States to work with ORHA; two advisors also deployed to the UK First Division in Kuwait.⁷⁶⁰ The numbers slowly continued to increase over the week. By the time of the invasion, around seven staff members were deployed.⁷⁶¹

Plans

The department had four different strategies between January 2002 and May 2003.⁷⁶² The first strategy, 'business as usual', meant allocating money to Iraq based on humanitarian and development needs.⁷⁶³ By that metric, Iraq was not a policy priority for the poverty-fighting department.⁷⁶⁴ After fall 2002, when it became part of the Ad Hoc Group of Officials, DFID started preparing for a potential engagement in Iraq.⁷⁶⁵ The Ad Hoc group 'broadly set up the department's role as being firstly to provide funds to other organisations ..., secondly to provide expert advice and assistance ... and thirdly to work with international partners'.⁷⁶⁶ Its focus was overwhelmingly on humanitarian assistance.⁷⁶⁷ A more advanced version of the second plan was set out in the 12 March 2003. The document 'Humanitarian Strategy and Immediate Assistance: A Plan for Iraq' identified three possible scenarios regarding the role

⁷⁵⁸ Ibid., 24.

⁷⁵⁹ Miller, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 21 July 2010", 13.

Chakrabarti, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 22-23.

Keeble, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 5 July 2010", 11.

⁷⁶⁰ Keeble, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry", 2.

⁷⁶¹ Ibid., 2.

⁷⁶² Chakrabarti, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 8.

⁷⁶³ Ibid., 8.

⁷⁶⁴ Ibid., 3-4.

⁷⁶⁵ Brewer, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry", 1.

Chakrabarti, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 9.

Miller, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 21 July 2010", 3-5.

Short, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 February 2010", 47.

⁷⁶⁶ Keeble, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry", 1.

⁷⁶⁷ Ibid., 1.

Webb et al., "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 24 November 2009", 105.

Chakrabarti, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 8.

Miller, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 21 July 2010", 4-5.

Keeble, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 5 July 2010", 20-24.

of the United Nations.⁷⁶⁸ The worst outcome, from DFID's point of view, would be a situation without UN mandate, which would effectively install an American viceroy in Iraq.⁷⁶⁹ The ideal would be a resolution that clearly put the United Nations in charge.⁷⁷⁰ The last option was something that would fall in between.

These plans were generic and little detailed.⁷⁷¹ A few mitigating factors apply. Throughout, DFID had a very unclear idea of the timeline that was likely to be followed, but assumed that a possible invasion was further off than it turned out to be.⁷⁷² Another problem was that DFID had little field experience in Iraq, which made detailed planning harder as they had no good idea of what the current situation in Iraq was like.⁷⁷³ This was initially made more problematic by the ban on talking to those outside organizations – like NGOs that were on the ground – that would have had better knowledge.⁷⁷⁴ And of course, DFID's working methods implied that these organizations would not only be talked to, but would agree to be involved.⁷⁷⁵ Lastly, the assumption was that DFID would help with crisis management, which obviously would depend on the crisis that would take place: 'wait and see' was the message there.

Assumptions

"We will work within a legal framework"

The Department for International Development worked under the assumption that they would work within international law. This sounds obvious, but it influenced their strategies and options in important ways.⁷⁷⁶ International laws on occupation stipulate that the occupiers have the right – and the duty – to cater to the humanitarian and security needs of

⁷⁶⁸ Chakrabarti, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 24-27.

Miller, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 21 July 2010", 15-16.

⁷⁶⁹ Chakrabarti, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 25.

⁷⁷⁰ Ibid., 27.

⁷⁷¹ Keeble, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry", 1.

⁷⁷² Short, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 February 2010", 12.

Ibid., 64.

⁷⁷³ Keeble, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry", 3.

Chakrabarti, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 9, 11-12.

Keeble, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 5 July 2010", 3, 17.

⁷⁷⁴ Chakrabarti, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 11-12.

Keeble, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 5 July 2010", 8.

⁷⁷⁵ Chakrabarti, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 35-36.

Keeble, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 5 July 2010", 14.

Short, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 February 2010", 59.

⁷⁷⁶ Chakrabarti, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 35.

Short, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 February 2010", 67-68.

Miller, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 21 July 2010", 14-15.

the people they have occupied. However, they are not allowed to fundamentally change the institutions and laws that guide the occupied territory. That meant that DFID was about to have a major problem in working together with the American ORHA, which in its perception intended to do exactly that: so the legality of reconstruction became 'quite a fundamental thing which actually did make for difficulties in operating with ORHA when ORHA wanted to, you know, change mechanisms for which there wasn't legal authority to do'.⁷⁷⁷ The quote comes from Desmond Bowen, who worked for the Ministry of Defence and for Cabinet (which shows that this was not just a problem that DFID recognized), but this had major implications for what the Development Department would be allowed to do.

"We need a relatively stable security environment to do our work"

The department had a humanitarian mission and it worked with and through civilians, not military personnel. That meant that its people could only work when there was a basic level of security, guaranteed by the military before this next phase can be started up.⁷⁷⁸ The United Nations will pull its people out if their security cannot be guaranteed well enough, as do most NGOs. This assumption becomes important when it is read in conjunction with the first one, because it takes time to get a legal framework for reconstruction, and by that time, security was starting to deteriorate.

"We will work by inserting money into the international system"

This is, of course, simply a description of the department's usual way of functioning. The Department for International Development, unlike the Ministry of Defence, did not normally send its own people to a conflict zone and putting them to work.⁷⁷⁹ Instead, the small department had a coordination and liaison function, and worked through other organizations like the United Nations and NGOs.⁷⁸⁰ The presumption that DFID would insert money into the international system rather than send people, therefore, was intimately related to another assumption:

"We will obtain international support and legitimacy before going into Iraq"

Any plan that assumed the department's usual way of functioning necessarily assumed a measure of international legitimacy. If the international community, the NGO's, the Red Cross,

⁷⁷⁷ Chilcott, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 23.

Bowen, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 7 December 2009", 24, 49-50.

⁷⁷⁸ Short, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 February 2010", 65.

⁷⁷⁹ Chakrabarti, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 9, 31.

Short, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 February 2010", 12.

⁷⁸⁰ Chakrabarti, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 9.

the United Nations, refused to be involved in a crisis, then the tasks given to DFID could not be executed properly: ‘if we didn’t get some kind of UN authorization, we wouldn’t get the World Bank, the IMF, we wouldn’t get other countries’.⁷⁸¹ All the plans of the Department for International Development, indeed its entire usual working method, thus relied on the assumption of a cooperative international system, which ultimately relies on legitimacy.⁷⁸² This concern with legitimacy had been brushed off by Number 10 and those in direct charge of the policy, and confused with a need for strict legality, which the British government successfully claimed it had obtained when the Attorney General declared the invasion was fine. When it came to the Development Department, however, this trick simply did not work, because the department relied on those partners.⁷⁸³ DFID’s concern with legitimacy, then, was not just about the moral high ground, although the Secretary of State made no secrets of that aspect either.

“The United Nations will have a lead role in post-invasion Iraq”⁷⁸⁴

This assumption underlay most of Whitehall’s planning and has already been discussed in the section on the Ministry of Defence. The Department for International Development counted on a lead role for the international organization in post-invasion Iraq for many of the same reasons. The legality and legitimacy of any invasion in Iraq have already been discussed, as has the separate legality of reconstructing and changing the country under occupation. The department also had a mission that was specifically human-centric and needs-based, in contrast to military organizations around the world, which are state-centric and results-based. For that reason, an organization like the United Nations would be a good counterweight to the military, helping to safeguard the more overall mission and concerns of the department. Of course, the Treasury’s assumption that other countries would pick up large parts of the reconstruction bill would also most easily be fulfilled if the United Nations came in.⁷⁸⁵

Summary: The Situation on the Eve of War

⁷⁸¹ Ibid., 59, 86-88, 99.

⁷⁸² Andrew Turnbull, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 13 January 2010,” 2010, 71.

Chakrabarti, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009”, 31.

Short, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 February 2010”, 12.

⁷⁸³ Chakrabarti, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009”, 35-36.

Keeble, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 5 July 2010”, 14.

⁷⁸⁴ Chakrabarti, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009”, 10, 23.

Miller, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 21 July 2010”, 15.

⁷⁸⁵ Chakrabarti, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009”, 35.

By March 2003, the Department for International Development had prepared for a humanitarian catastrophe including the potential use of weapons of mass destruction, food shortages after the disruption of the Food-for-Oil program, and the displacement of many Iraqis. Most of the details, however, were left vague as the department intended to respond to crises as and where they developed. The department also understood that there was an intention to rebuild Iraq, going beyond the rights covered by a lawful invasion, but was clear that it would need a separate Security Council resolution to do so. It expected the United Nations to have a substantial role post-invasion, and it planned to distribute its aid and help through other (usually civilian) organizations that would be present in Iraq.

4. FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

Context: Working for the best

This chapter focuses on the preparation of a possible military invasion of Iraq. In other words, it concentrates mainly on the preparation of the plan that eventually ended up happening. An invasion and regime change, however, were the back-up plan for most of the period in the lead-up to the war. This meant that the Foreign Office was working a difficult balancing act. Ideally, it was working to achieve disarmament without force. Realistically, it was working to achieve disarmament with force and with Security Council backing. However, getting the agreement of the Security Council to deal with Saddam Hussein required that London not be perceived as belligerent. The Council was willing to pressurise Baghdad into disarmament but would only consider force as a last option. It was also (justifiably) weary of the Anglo-American zeal, worried that the United Nations route was just a pretext for an invasion. This meant that the Foreign Office had to convey that it was looking for a peaceful resolution, while also preparing for the alternative: an invasion (with United Nations backing).

Little wonder then that the Foreign Office had a tough time negotiating a satisfactory Security Council Resolution. In addition, its first hurdle had not been the Security Council: it had been to convince the United States to go down the Security Council route at all. From September 2002 on, when Washington agreed to go to the Security Council, the Foreign Office was working on the future Resolution 1441 with the goal of making it self-containing, so that no further resolution would be necessary to justify military action. Of course, once that resolution was passed, it was legally dubious (although the government ignored that, and it is likely that many civil servants would not have been aware of this or able to have an informed opinion about it). The Foreign Office subsequently worked very hard on getting a second

resolution, to improve the legal grounds and solve the clear legitimacy problem. All of this explains why the Foreign Office – eternally overstretched anyway – had little time and resources to prepare for the actual invasion or the aftermath, even though reconstruction and the overall foreign policy would have fallen under its remit.

The pressure of the various timelines was another dimension that the Foreign Office had to balance. The diplomatic route clearly demanded more time: more time to make resolutions work and allow Saddam Hussein to trip up, more time to convince other countries that invasion was necessary, more time to not look like the diplomatic process was but an excuse. Not being willing to wait a little longer with Saddam Hussein – especially as there were no clear new factors that suddenly made him a more urgent problem – meant that the burden of proof shifted from Baghdad to London and Washington. The debate became less about what Baghdad is hiding and more about why the hurry.

The pressure in favour of speedy action came from the military timetable, in particular the American one. There are two different arguments about time. The first one is that, once the troops have built up in the Gulf, there is an argument for using them quickly, to prevent an attack with weapons of mass destruction on the troops in waiting. The other argument was that the Foreign Office ‘kept hearing that it would get too hot around March/April and tanks wouldn’t work and therefore, we had to have a decision’. Although the civil servants of the Foreign Office would have found it hard to judge the merit of that argument; ‘it was clearly a view strongly felt and strongly put and did act, without any question at all, as a constraint on the negotiating process’. There might well have been additional other reasons on the American side. Either way, the American military timetable was pressing hard and the Foreign Office was not in a position to negotiate with it.

Planning Process: Preparing for the worst

First half of 2002

After the terrorist attacks of September 2001, the initial attention was on Afghanistan, but by January 2002 it was becoming clear that the American approach to Iraq was changing, with the Axis of Evil speech as perhaps the most public example.⁷⁸⁶ It was clear to the Foreign Office that Baghdad would be a difficult issue in the ‘special relationship’ and that London and Washington were unlikely to be on the same page.⁷⁸⁷ At the same time, Foreign Secretary

⁷⁸⁶ Jay, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 30 June 2010”, 2.

⁷⁸⁷ Ibid., 2.

Jack Straw read the Axis of Evil speech as being as much about domestic American politics as about foreign policy, and the prospect of a conflict did not take up much time or attention yet in the Foreign Office.⁷⁸⁸

July 2002 – September 2002

The Foreign Office always works under high pressure and on many issues and had many other questions to worry about during that period too.⁷⁸⁹ It is only by the summer of 2002, once the crisis – with potential nuclear ramifications – between India and Pakistan has passed, that Iraq rose up the Foreign Office agenda as a priority.⁷⁹⁰ The usual constant demands from Number 10 and the Cabinet Office now included briefings and papers on Iraq. While '[they] always wanted more ... my understanding is that [those briefings] were well received'.⁷⁹¹ Incidentally, these briefings to higher-up without real understanding of or influence on what the exact policy line was at this time, shows just how much Iraq policy was in the hands of the few people concentrated around the Prime Minister.

September 2002 – January 2003

From September 2002 onwards – when the United States agrees to go through the Security Council – Iraq was becoming 'an extremely serious issue' that had more resources devoted to it.⁷⁹² The Foreign Office started preparing papers on the issue, including one by Peter Collecott, the Director of Corporate Services (that is the head of the administration) about possible scenarios in Iraq.⁷⁹³ Dominick Chilcott (unrelated to Chilcot from the Inquiry) joined the Office's Middle East Department in September 2002.⁷⁹⁴ His initial job was to work on how best to find allies amongst European Union partners for the developing Iraq policy, but it soon morphed into a job thinking about the post-war phase if there were to be a conflict.⁷⁹⁵ He was the exception: most of the departmental efforts were focused on the Security Council process.⁷⁹⁶

⁷⁸⁸ Ibid., 3.

⁷⁸⁹ Ibid., 6-7.

⁷⁹⁰ Ibid., 3-7.

⁷⁹¹ Ibid., 12.

⁷⁹² Ibid., 5.

⁷⁹³ Ibid., 5.

⁷⁹⁴ Chilcott, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 2-3.

⁷⁹⁵ Ibid., 3.

⁷⁹⁶ Jack Straw, "Letter to the Prime Minister: 'Iraq: Pursuing the UN Route,'" *Foreign and Commonwealth Office*, September 14, 2002.

Peter Ricketts, "Note: 'Iraq: Resolutions: The 'Kosovo Option,'" *Foreign and Commonwealth Office*, October 3, 2002.

By October 2002, the conceptual work of what will later become the Iraq Planning Unit begins.⁷⁹⁷ A submission to Jack Straw of 14 or 15 October argued for a United Nations framework and a credible legal base for the 'day after' actions.⁷⁹⁸ Interestingly enough, though, it was the United Nations department of the Foreign Office that began looking at the 'morning after' as well, apparently because the individuals involved felt that 'it did not seem ... that anyone was thinking about these things'.⁷⁹⁹ They started identifying volunteers for policing in Iraq in January 2003.⁸⁰⁰ Foreign Office civil servants were also a part of the first round of Anglo-American interagency talks that took part on 6 November 2002 (also mentioned earlier in the section on DFID).⁸⁰¹

February 2003 – March 2003: The Iraq Planning/Policy Unit

In February 2003, the decision was made that a cross-Whitehall unit should be set up to deal with the day after issues.⁸⁰² This unit was located in the Foreign Office.⁸⁰³ The Iraq Planning Unit, later renamed the Iraq Policy Unit, was meant to allow for an overall strategy. It was conceived as a step up from the Ad Hoc Group of Officials, the group that had been set up in September 2002. The Ad Hoc Group had been an exchange platform; the Iraq Unit was supposed to draw together and coordinate the entire effort.⁸⁰⁴ The Unit put up advice and provided a lot of background material for ministerial discussions.⁸⁰⁵ It thus functioned as a response to the concerns of Boyce and other senior military people who felt that there needed to be a step change in Whitehall's thinking about post-war planning.⁸⁰⁶ It also addressed the concerns of the staff of the Department for International Development, who had (rightly) felt excluded from a lot of the initial preparation.⁸⁰⁷

Mark Sedwill, "Note: 'Iraq: Foreign Secretary's Conversation with the Attorney-General, 18 October,'" *Foreign and Commonwealth Office*, October 18, 2002.

Wood, "Note: 'Iraq: Legal Basis for the Possible Use of Force.'"

⁷⁹⁷ Ibid., 17.

⁷⁹⁸ Ibid., 17.

⁷⁹⁹ Pattison, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry", 9-10, 82.

Ibid., 9-10.

⁸⁰⁰ Ibid., 12.

Ibid., 12.

Stephen Pattison and John Buck, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 31 January 2011 (Afternoon Session)," n.d, 2, 4.

⁸⁰¹ Chilcott, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 17.

⁸⁰² Ibid., 3.

⁸⁰³ Ibid., 3.

⁸⁰⁴ Ibid., 5-9.

⁸⁰⁵ Chilcott, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 10.

⁸⁰⁶ Ibid., 5.

⁸⁰⁷ Chakrabarti, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 20.

Short, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 February 2010", 94-95.

However, Whitehall officials have described the Iraq Planning Unit as ‘too little too late. It did not have the expertise to ask and address the key questions about post conflict reconstruction. The Unit seems to have recognised early that US planning was inadequate, but did little to tackle this’.⁸⁰⁸ They described it as ‘a very small team’, ‘quickly overwhelmed’ that ‘suffered, like Garner [of the American ORHA], from the chaos, lack of coherent planning and a chorus of competing voices’.⁸⁰⁹ Pattison was the head of the United Nations Department of the Foreign Office; this was the department that had taken it on itself to prepare for policing. He felt that ‘I did not see a lot of material coming out of that unit on post-conflict planning’, and there is no doubt that British planning on the eve of the war was still piecemeal and wildly inadequate.⁸¹⁰

The IPU was announced on 5 February 2003, the same day as the transatlantic talks about the post-conflict role of the United Nations.⁸¹¹ These talks excelled in clarity: the United States was ‘implacably hostile’ towards a substantial role for the United Nations in post-invasion Iraq, and on 6 February let it be understood that there would be ‘no question of any high profile UN role in administering Iraq’.⁸¹² The Foreign Office’s UN Department concluded that this needed to be taken up by the Prime Minister to go directly via the President.⁸¹³ London kept making the point in its various contacts with Washington, with little immediate success.⁸¹⁴ Only in the Hillsborough meeting of 7 and 8 April 2003 – *after* the invasion – would the Prime Minister convince the American president enough for the latter to concede a ‘vital role’ for the United Nations (and it would later become clear that he meant much less by that than did London).⁸¹⁵

In February 2003, however, the Foreign Office was still working hard on the issue of the day after. It was not just the role for the United Nations: during the rock-drill of ORHA on 21 and 22 February, mentioned earlier in the section on Defence, it became abundantly clear ‘how undercooked ORHA was as an operation’.⁸¹⁶ The groundwork done by Iraqi exiles under the

⁸⁰⁸ Pattison, “Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry”, 14.

Pattison, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 31 January 2011 (Morning Session)”, 94.

⁸⁰⁹ Cross, “Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry: ‘Post-Invasion Iraq: The Planning and the Reality After the Invasion From Mid-2002 to the End of August 2003.’”, 14.

⁸¹⁰ Pattison, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 31 January 2011 (Morning Session)”, 5-8.

⁸¹¹ Pattison, “Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry”, 10.

Someone else puts the date on 10 February 2003.

Bowen, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 7 December 2009”, 17.

⁸¹² Pattison, “Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry”, 10.

Pattison, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 31 January 2011 (Morning Session)”, 83.

⁸¹³ *Ibid.*, 83.

⁸¹⁴ Chilcott, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009”, 24.

⁸¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 15-16.

⁸¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 20-21.

'Future of Iraq Project' coordinated by the American State department, had been thrown out and ORHA was starting from scratch: it was utterly underprepared.⁸¹⁷ Like DFID, the Foreign Office also had worries about being too closely associated with the office because of the scale of its ambitions, which 'without specific Security Council authorization ... would go beyond what we were allowed to do as occupying powers on the basis of the Geneva Convention and The Hague regulations'.⁸¹⁸ Those worries were communicated back home, much as they were in the Defence Department, with just as little result.⁸¹⁹

Plans

Policing & Security Sector Reform

The Foreign Office had taken on an operational role on international policing in general and did this for Iraq as well.⁸²⁰ It identified British police volunteers to participate in international policing missions.⁸²¹ For Iraq they initially planned to follow the usual pattern of 'supplying a relatively small number of British police, whose main role would be training and advice on security sector reform'.⁸²² Providing executive police forces for Iraq would have far exceeded the United Kingdom's capacity.⁸²³ In fact, Washington approached London with exactly that question; but when the British replied that they would not be able to, Washington changed its mind and assessed that we would not 'need an executive police force made up of international components after all in Iraq'.⁸²⁴ The plan thereafter remained to send only trainers and advisors: even recruiting those proved hard.⁸²⁵

British Sector

The concept of a British sector and the decision to have one had major implications, both for the resources needed to make it a success and for what it meant for Britain's responsibility for Iraq (the full British division and its independent sector are probably the reason it got

⁸¹⁷ Ibid., 21-22.

Democratic Principles Work Group, *Final Report On The Transition To Democracy In Iraq*, 2002.

⁸¹⁸ Ibid., 23.

⁸¹⁹ Ibid., 22.

⁸²⁰ Pattison, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry", 12.

Pattison and Buck, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 31 January 2011 (Afternoon Session)", 2.

⁸²¹ Pattison, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry", 12.

Pattison and Buck, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 31 January 2011 (Afternoon Session)", 2.

⁸²² Ibid., 3.

⁸²³ Ibid., 3.

⁸²⁴ Ibid., 3.

⁸²⁵ Ibid., 14.

named as a full occupying power in Security Council Resolution 1483).⁸²⁶ However, when the idea of having a British sector initially came up – when people were still tossing around ideas, as opposed to doing serious planning – both the Department for International Development and the Treasury expressed hesitations at the level of commitment this would entail.⁸²⁷

Much depends on how one defined a ‘British sector’. Initially, the idea was that those areas that were under British control – whose security was safeguarded by British troops – would not be treated differently by the American Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance: the American Department of Defence told Mike O’Brien of the Foreign Office as late as 12 March 2003 that there was ‘no question of food distribution or public-sector salaries stopping at the border of any British sector’.⁸²⁸

The problem was that the plans for Phase IV were so underdeveloped for the circumstances in which the *de facto* occupiers now found themselves that little of the supposed activity throughout the entire country happened.⁸²⁹ The result was an acute gap that London started filling by investing more people and more money into the area to address ‘the need to have acceptance amongst the people of southern Iraq’.⁸³⁰ The four provinces around Basra thus ended up being a lot more British than was the intention at the outset.⁸³¹ The bill also ran up a lot higher than initially expected, not because the United States was unwilling to pick up the bill on principle, but because its planning and system for disbursements were simply not functioning.⁸³² As this British sector in that sense was ‘an unintended, unplanned consequence’, ‘we couldn’t really have been properly [prepared for it]’.⁸³³ After all, ‘ministers had not taken a clear decision that that’s what we are going to do’.⁸³⁴ So the reason there was no plan for a British sector beyond guarding security, was that there was no intention to have a British sector in that sense.

Day After & Role of the United Nations

For the aftermath, the Foreign Office did not have much of a plan either. In the words of one of its staff: ‘The first thing to say about the plan is that there was only ever going to be one

⁸²⁶ Manning, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 30 November 2009”, 91.

⁸²⁷ Chilcott, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009”, 28.

⁸²⁸ *Ibid.*, 29.

⁸²⁹ *Ibid.*, 29.

⁸³⁰ *Ibid.*, 30, 33.

⁸³¹ *Ibid.*, 31.

⁸³² *Ibid.*, 30, 33.

⁸³³ *Ibid.*, 31.

⁸³⁴ *Ibid.*, 31.

plan. That would be the coalition plan, which would largely be an American plan.’⁸³⁵ What mattered, therefore, was influencing the American plan.⁸³⁶ There was no alternative: ‘I am afraid we have to face the fact that if the US didn’t want the UN, we, the UK, were a very small part of the US effort.’⁸³⁷ Not only was London very clearly the junior partner; there was also ‘a pretty incoherent state of mind in the United States administration at that point, [so that] it was difficult to know who one would try to influence’.⁸³⁸

At the same time, that ‘lack of sense of preparation on the American side for a clear post-war plan [was never] brought up as a reason for the UK not to be involved ... because at the same time we had much bigger things to worry about’.⁸³⁹ This is interesting, because it goes against the earlier British idea of a solid war plan (which must involve *all* phases including the fourth) as a condition for participation. Now, the British plan for the day after was virtually non-existent, but London would follow the American plan anyway, and the Foreign Office was much too busy trying to get a second resolution that would bring London on safe legal and political grounds to devote much time to the issue.

Role of the United Nations

The United Nations Department of the Foreign Office had considered two broad options for the United Nations post-invasion.⁸⁴⁰ The first was a ‘UN light’ in which the bulk of the Iraqi administration would remain in place.⁸⁴¹ The bigger option was a full United Nations administration, which would be given full law-making powers.⁸⁴² The Foreign Office’s preference was for the lighter version, based on the view that Iraq was already an efficiently run state with a functioning civil service.⁸⁴³ These models were developed in-house, without consultation with the United Nations.⁸⁴⁴ It was nonetheless clear that the organization was thinking along the same lines.⁸⁴⁵ In a by now well-known refrain, Washington was not keen on the plans; but up until at least February 2003 the British Foreign Office maintained optimism that the Americans could be persuaded.⁸⁴⁶ Their case was based on the symbolism

⁸³⁵ Ibid., 18-20.

⁸³⁶ Ibid., 19.

⁸³⁷ Pattison, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 31 January 2011 (Morning Session)”, 90-91.

⁸³⁸ Jay, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 30 June 2010”, 33, 34.

⁸³⁹ Chilcott, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009”, 25.

⁸⁴⁰ Pattison, “Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry”, 9.

⁸⁴¹ Ibid., 9.

⁸⁴² Ibid., 9.

⁸⁴³ Ibid., 9-10.

⁸⁴⁴ Pattison, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 31 January 2011 (Morning Session)”, 86.

⁸⁴⁵ Pattison, “Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry”, 10.

Pattison, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 31 January 2011 (Morning Session)”, 82, 87.

⁸⁴⁶ Ibid., 88-89.

of bringing in the United Nations as much as anything else (mainly money): ‘You don’t get the UN in ... to do it more efficiently. You get the UN in to do it differently’.⁸⁴⁷ The argument did not resonate with an American administration ideologically opposed to the United Nations.

Assumptions

“The United Nations have a leading role in the post-war phase... hopefully”

The model of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office for the post-war period consisted of three phases.⁸⁴⁸ The first would be the period of occupation governed by the Geneva and The Hague regulations, during which London would be responsible for the welfare of the Iraqi people.⁸⁴⁹ The aim was to keep this period as short as possible.⁸⁵⁰ Iraq would then move to some form of interim administration, before culminating in a new Iraqi government, which would be supported by coalition security forces for as long as Baghdad wanted them there.⁸⁵¹ During most of the preparation, the Foreign Office hoped that the United Nations would be in charge of the interim arrangements.⁸⁵² Later, the Office moved to the idea that an interim administration authorized by the Security Council would be good enough, if it would not be able to get a UN-lead interim phase.⁸⁵³

“We will maintain the Iraqi police forces” & “We will get international police forces in”

For post-conflict policing, the assumption very clearly was that the United Nations would be involved.⁸⁵⁴ Specifically, the Foreign Office’s plans assumed and expected that a United Nations police force would help reform the Iraqi security sector. This would never happen unless countries were prepared to contribute troops.⁸⁵⁵ Like was the case for DFID’s plans, this meant that the United Nations needed to have a genuine role because the international community needed to commit.⁸⁵⁶

⁸⁴⁷ Ibid., 88-89.

⁸⁴⁸ Chilcott, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009”, 33-34.

⁸⁴⁹ Ibid., 33-34.

⁸⁵⁰ Ibid., 34.

⁸⁵¹ Ibid., 34-35.

⁸⁵² Although it seemed less confident than other departments that this would be the case. Pattison, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 31 January 2011 (Morning Session)”, 82-83.

⁸⁵³ Chilcott, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009”, 34.

⁸⁵⁴ Pattison and Buck, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 31 January 2011 (Afternoon Session)”, 10.

⁸⁵⁵ Ibid., 10, 12.

⁸⁵⁶ Ibid., 10.

The second assumption with regards to policing was that the Iraqi police forces would be maintained: without them, the country would be much too big for an external police force.⁸⁵⁷ Of course, if the Iraqi police forces would not be kept *and* there would be no proper international engagement, all bets would be off. If the United Nations would not do it, the United States would have to do it (despite having shown no interest in doing so earlier), because there was no other alternative worldwide.⁸⁵⁸ The European Union or the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) would be unlikely to want to be involved.⁸⁵⁹ The assumption was not only that the Iraqi police forces would be maintained: there was also an implicit expectation that the breakdown in law and order would be limited.⁸⁶⁰

“The Iraqi administration will easily switch into a new administration”

The plan involving a limited UN administration rested on the assumption that ‘Iraq was in many ways an efficiently run state with a functioning civil service’ and that ‘technocrats who had served Saddam would switch easily into serving a new administration’.⁸⁶¹ This assumption was apparently shared by the United Nations itself: the head of the United Nations Development Program told Clare Short that its role should be light because the capacity of the United Nations was limited and the Iraqi administration was strong in its own right.⁸⁶² This got reported back to the Foreign Office via the British diplomatic mission in New York.⁸⁶³

Summary: The Situation on the Eve of War

During most of the period leading up to war, the Foreign Office had worked on avoiding conflict and making a potential conflict legal and politically sound. As a result, the department had done little to prepare for the actual invasion and aftermath. Some work had been done to prepare for policing duties in Iraq. This work relied on the Iraqi police forces maintaining intact and on the international community contributing. Most of the plans for the after-war period assumed a role for the United Nations; all assumed a functioning civil service. The Foreign Office also hosted the Iraq Planning/Policy Unit, which was meant to

⁸⁵⁷ Ibid., 12.

⁸⁵⁸ Pattison, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 31 January 2011 (Morning Session)”, 90-91.

⁸⁵⁹ Pattison and Buck, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 31 January 2011 (Afternoon Session)”, 10-11. Pattison, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 31 January 2011 (Morning Session)”, 90.

⁸⁶⁰ Pattison and Buck, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 31 January 2011 (Afternoon Session)”, 5, 15.

⁸⁶¹ Pattison, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 31 January 2011 (Morning Session)”, 79-81.

⁸⁶² Pattison, “Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry”, 10.

⁸⁶³ Ibid., 10.

draw together all department and provide an overall strategy. However, this unit was largely overwhelmed and did not contribute much more than the individual departments. Even though the department was aware of the weaknesses in the American planning for the aftermath, the overall Foreign Office plan remained to influence the American one.

5. CABINET OFFICE

The Cabinet Office functions as the link between the political decisions in Cabinet and its Committees on one hand and the coordination and implementation of that policy in Whitehall. It is a rather small department (around 2,050 staff in 2014) with few direct powers, few people ‘and even less money’.⁸⁶⁴ ‘[I]t is not equipped to run an operation directly’ – that is what the various other departments are for – but it works by bringing others together.⁸⁶⁵ Its task is the coordination and integration of policy.⁸⁶⁶ The Cabinet Office has permanent subgroups like the Defence and Overseas Secretariat but also regularly sets up ad hoc groups to handle specific issues.

In September 2002, the Cabinet Office set up *an* ad hoc group on Iraq and confusingly called it *the* Ad Hoc Group of Officials on Iraq, or the Ad Hoc Group.⁸⁶⁷ This is the Ad Hoc group referred to earlier in this chapter. It should not be confused with the unnamed ad hoc group of ministers and Downing Street advisors that had been meeting regularly on the topic of Iraq since a few months before. Nor should it be confused with another ad hoc group that started meeting after the invasion, or the Ministerial Ad Hoc Iraq Rehabilitation Group set up after the invasion in the first week of April 2003. This Ad Hoc Group of Officials, as opposed to other ad hoc groups, was ‘a Cabinet Office group and people were invited to join that on the basis [that] they had a right and a need and a purpose in being there’ – this set it apart from some of the earlier groups which had been informal ‘sofa government’ arrangements and excluded Clare Short.⁸⁶⁸ This group acted as an exchange platform between the different departments, but never as a driver of policy.

In fact, the unit that comes closest to driving, coordinating, and integrating the overall policy was the Iraq Planning/Policy Unit located in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, as

⁸⁶⁴ Turnbull, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 13 January 2010”, 2.

⁸⁶⁵ Ibid., 2.

Ibid., 2.

⁸⁶⁶ Cabinet Office, “About Us,” accessed July 6, 2015, <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/cabinet-office/about>.

⁸⁶⁷ Turnbull, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 13 January 2010”, 9, 29.

Chakrabarti, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009”, 7, 9, 58.

⁸⁶⁸ Turnbull, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 13 January 2010”, 29.

described in the last section. However, this was a rather illogical place for the coordinating unit to be. Of course, the Foreign Office was arguably responsible for the most general policy line on Iraq, but coordination of policy is what the Cabinet Office is for.⁸⁶⁹ It was the Overseas and Defence Secretariat that 'would have been the natural place to act as a focus' for this kind of work; 'to coordinate the question about the aftermath planning in the Cabinet Office'.⁸⁷⁰

Half a dozen witnesses in the Iraq Inquiry have brought up this strange vacuum in pulling all the threads of the policy together, a role which, Stephen Pattison argued, 'I would have traditionally expected the Cabinet Office to fill'.⁸⁷¹ Normally – as had been the case in previous conflicts – there would have been a committee of Permanent Secretaries (the civil service heads of each department) set up in the Cabinet Office under the Cabinet Secretary to ensure coordination and full implementation of policy.⁸⁷² Kevin Tebbit, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Defence, 'asked ... to be more involved ... in the discussions that were going on, and the decision was that that was not the way things were going to be. I think Number 10 felt that it was quite a crowded place already and that to widen it would mean widening it too far from their point of view'.⁸⁷³ The result was a Vanishing Cabinet Office that was virtually absent in policy-making.

It would be unfair to say that the Cabinet Office did nothing about Iraq policy.⁸⁷⁴ The Joint Intelligence Committee was obviously reporting, the Overseas Secretariat regularly discussed Iraq and the Ad Hoc group set up in Cabinet brought staff from relevant departments together to exchange information. However, the Cabinet Office never managed to weigh in on policy in an important way. It most certainly did not achieve what it was supposed to do, which is the coordination and integration of Iraq policy. Normal procedures for using the Cabinet Office machinery, like setting up a committee of the relevant Permanent Secretaries, were disregarded.

6. CONCLUSION

⁸⁶⁹ Bowen, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 7 December 2009", 15.

⁸⁷⁰ McKane, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 19 January 2011", 64.

⁸⁷¹ Pattison, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry", 11.

Pattison and Buck, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 31 January 2011 (Afternoon Session)", 6, 9.

Pattison, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 31 January 2011 (Morning Session)", 105.

Tebbit, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 3 February 2010", 22.

Jay, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 30 June 2010", 43.

⁸⁷² Ibid., 43, 44.

⁸⁷³ Short, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 February 2010", 58.

⁸⁷⁴ John Scarlett, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009," 2009, 36.

McKane, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 19 January 2011", 47.

Also see the documents by the Cabinet Office from that period, available on the Iraq Inquiry website.

This chapter discussed the planning for the invasion of Iraq throughout Whitehall. It looked at the preparations made in each department, the planning process, and the assumptions that underlay those plans. The Ministry of Defence was the first department to start planning for a possible invasion. That is both because military operations need a long lead-in time – if you want to keep your options open, you should prepare for war – and because they were kept relatively better informed of plans in the United States, and possible British reactions, than the Department for International Development. The preparation made by Defence was made against the background of severe budgetary constraints, even as the Treasury was willing to pay for the extra costs that came with the invasion itself.

The British military was engaged in Afghanistan at the same time and contributing a full division to potential action in Iraq broke the assumptions around which the defence machinery was built; yet London contributed this biggest option as soon as it became clear that it would be able to. There was a general expectation that putting boots on the ground would give the British more influence on American-led planning. The war plan initially was to go through the North of Iraq as well as through the South, but when Turkey refused passage the entire plan got changed to entry through Kuwait. This change left the US 4th Division stuck in the North, but not the UK 1st Division that was initially supposed to be integrated with the 4th: it went to the South and participated in initial combat. As a result, the British contribution to the invasion became a lot more significant – one third of combat power – than ever envisaged, although the British only pulled off the change of plan with significant logistical help from the Pentagon.

Although little preparation had been done for Phase IV, the phase after the fighting, there was a general expectation that the military would maintain order until the civilians came in and started doing their job of reconstructing the country. The existing Iraqi infrastructure and military forces would be preserved as much as possible to allow the country to get up and running again as soon as possible. Moreover, the expectation for the post-war phase was that other actors – DFID, the United States, Iraq itself, the international community – would start picking up the bill for reconstruction. Although the British military leaders thought it unlikely that Britain would be able to draw down within six months, the assumption in the Strategic Defence Review around which the troops are built, there was an expectation that other international troops would start coming in, allowing London to draw down. This required legitimacy and United Nations involvement.

The Department for International Development has been heavily criticized by parts of the military for its perceived failure to do its job; a failure that is also attributed to bad will,

mostly on behalf of its Secretary of State Clare Short. However, the Department was limited severely in what it could do by both law and practicality. The expectation that the civilians would come in and start reconstructing right away was understandable – for it was a strategic imperative – but clashed with international law. The laws governing the occupation of a foreign territory do not allow changing domestic systems, which is what the American Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance was trying to do. Providing humanitarian aid was fine, but proved largely unnecessary, it has been argued *because* DFID was prepared and immediately could start providing help.

There were other constraints for the Development Department. Firstly, it had only been involved from September 2002 onwards and had no clear idea of when war would likely occur. Thus, not aware of the military pressures on the timeline, they assumed the invasion would be rather later than was eventually the case. Secondly, the entire idea of going in as part of a military campaign is somewhat anathema to the mission of the department, which is pro-poor. The department was used – and tasked – to work according to worldwide needs, and setting those needs aside to help a government policy that was based on different rationales altogether was problematic, particularly as the Treasury for the longest time expected the department to pay its contribution to Iraq out of its own budget, meant for worldwide humanitarian crises.

DFID's working methods were poorly understood. The department works through other agencies, by inserting money and expertise into the international system and coordinating and liaising with other institutions. This means that any plan involving the department would be contingent on these other institutions being able and willing to go to Iraq. They would only be able to if there was a relatively stable security environment, and they would not be able to go until there was an appropriate legal framework, different from that for the invasion itself. They would also only be willing to be involved if the invasion and reconstruction were perceived as legitimate endeavours. For those reasons, a substantial and genuine post-conflict role for the United Nations was not just morally desirable from DFID's point of view: it was a practical necessity.

Certainly up until September, and to a substantial extent thereafter, the Foreign Office was busy trying to avoid a road that would lead to military action and, after Britain firmly got on that road, negotiating favourable political conditions. This meant that the Office had very little room left to prepare for an invasion if it were to happen. It also had to balance various competing pressures, including those of the diplomatic timetable and the military timetable, and the need to go to the Security Council to get permission for military action, permission

that would only be given if the United Kingdom did not seem eager to go to war. The Foreign Office had the initial policy lead on reconstruction (something that afterwards seems to have been taken over by DFID) but did not prepare a lot except for some preliminary work on policing. That policing strategy relied on the Iraqi police forces remaining intact and on an international community willing to contribute.

From February 2002, the Foreign Office had the Iraq Planning Unit, the later Iraq Policy Unit and Iraq Directorate. This Unit was supposed to fill a clear gap in overall coordination and integration of the policy. This would have normally been done by the Cabinet Office, but the Cabinet Office never moved beyond organizing the Ad Hoc Group of Officials, which was an exchange platform between departments but did not lead the policy. The Iraq Planning Unit essentially failed in its task. American planning for the aftermath was shoddy (as was the British planning), but although departments all throughout Whitehall flagged this up, it was never taken up.

This chapter ends on the eve of the invasion. The next chapter discusses the invasion and the immediate aftermath: it details how Whitehall's plans fared when tested on the ground. The last chapter looks at the entire sequence of events: the decision to go to war described in chapter III, the preparation for the war described in this chapter, and the execution of the plans, described in chapter V. It analyses how Britain's weak negotiation with the United States and the Security Council – in particular its failure to develop a preferred alternative and corresponding minimal requirements – left it with a policy that was far from its usual policy; how this was unclear to Whitehall, which had prepared on the basis of assumptions that were no longer justified; and how these assumptions meant the plans were unsuitable for the invasion as it happened.

Chapter V: Fighting the War

1. INTRODUCTION

This last empirical chapter shows the situation British troops (and civilians) found themselves in once they crossed into Iraqi territory. It discusses the situation on the ground immediately after the Coalition gained control – or at least responsibility – over the territory. Having described these events, it compares the circumstances under which the invasion happened to the circumstances, laid out in the last chapter, on which British planning was based. The argumentative burden of this chapter is to show that those circumstances were very different and that the plans were unsuitable for the conflict as it happened. It is divided into three sections: the first sketches the situation on the ground after the invasion; the second compares the assumptions teased out in the last chapter to the situation on the ground; the third section describes the likely link between this contrast and the following insurgency, but most importantly highlights that a detailed analysis of this element falls outside the scope of the dissertation.

After the warfighting, British troops took responsibility for the region around the Southern city of Basra. They soon found themselves overstretched and without much guidance. The Office for Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA), the American organization set up in January 2003 to fill gaps in American post-war planning done by CENTCOM, was overwhelmed and badly run.⁸⁷⁵ After the establishment of the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) on 16 April 2003, Jay Garner, the head of ORHA, was replaced in May by Paul Bremer, who had a wider mandate than Garner.⁸⁷⁶ ORHA was subsumed into the CPA. The CPA worked better but took decisions that the British neither expected nor were consulted on.⁸⁷⁷ The British troops also struggled to get the necessary funds to start urgent repair and construction works. The British capital, meanwhile, proved unresponsive.⁸⁷⁸ There was no

⁸⁷⁵ Feith, *War and Decision*, 349.

⁸⁷⁶ Ibid., 441-442.

Coalition Provisional Authority, *Coalition Provisional Authority Regulation Number 1*, 2003, http://govinfo.library.unt.edu/cpa-iraq/regulations/20030516_CPAREG_1_The_Coalition_Provisional_Authority_.pdf.

⁸⁷⁷ Coalition Provisional Authority, *Coalition Provisional Authority Order Number 1: De-Ba'athification Of Iraqi Society*, 2003.

⁸⁷⁸ Viggers, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry", 3, 6.

Synnott, Lamb, and Stewart, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 9 December 2009 (First Session)", 49-50.

Chakrabarti, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 53-55.

Hoon, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 19 January 2010", 92.

proper structure to receive information, no senior official or minister in charge, and no coherent policy.

Many of these struggles can be attributed to the fact that the plans were simply not made or useful for the circumstances in which these British found themselves. The military had presumed that civilian experts and money would be available immediately after the invasion. The Department for International Development however, which in the military's view was meant to deliver these, had no plans that suited these circumstances. Its plans assumed that it would insert expertise and money via the United Nations; that money would be made available through contributions of other UN nations (as could be expected when the Security Council decides on the necessity of a military intervention); that war would happen later; and that it would not cooperate with any organization wanting to reorganise Iraq until there was a specific – necessary – Security Council resolution for this purpose.

The net result of these many miscalculations was that the occupiers failed to improve daily life in the weeks after they took control of the territory; nor did they manage to guarantee safety and security for Iraqi civilians. As the military literature has described extensively, this cocktail of unpreparedness and the challenges of Iraq quickly resulted in an insurgency and debilitating instability for years to come. How London's unpreparedness (and *mis*preparedness, as this dissertation has shown) impacted developments in Iraq, and to what extent the long war in Iraq was inevitable, is a question that draws on more and different factors than the ones examined in this dissertation. This chapter ends when it becomes clear that the British troops are struggling in Iraq because of unsuitable plans. As the next chapter will conclude, this was the overall result of a failure to clearly define policy with a policy goal, strategy, preferred alternative, and minimal requirements.

2. HERE WE ARE NOW... THE POST-WAR PHASE

The situation in Iraq

The British 1 Division had ended up in and around Basra, responsible for the four most Southern governorates (provinces) of the country. After the fall of the old regime, the three British fighting brigades were rotated out quickly and replaced by UK 3 Division. Between July and December 2003, this UK 3 Division was replaced by a Multi-National Division (South-East), abbreviated as MND(SE).⁸⁷⁹ General Officer Graeme Lamb, who arrived in July

⁸⁷⁹ Synnott, Lamb, and Stewart, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 9 December 2009 (First Session)", 6.

2003, oversaw this transition between July 2003 and December 2003.⁸⁸⁰ A refrain throughout those first months that the military in the South felt neglected (with some good cause) by most other players, notably by Baghdad, by the British government, and by DFID.⁸⁸¹ The main message coming out of Baghdad was simply to 'keep [the] South quiet', without further instruction.⁸⁸² The bigger problem was nonetheless not a lack of military instructions, but rather a lack of resources.⁸⁸³ The British military understood that rapid improvement in the day-to-day life of ordinary Iraqis was crucial to long-term success. Yet to improve the situation, they needed both money and (civilian) expertise on post-war reconstruction.⁸⁸⁴ Neither London nor Baghdad was providing it.

In February 2003, Tim Cross had been appointed as British representative to the American Office for Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA).⁸⁸⁵ Before the invasion, he had repeatedly reported back to London that the preparation of that organization was profoundly flawed and undercooked, to no apparent avail. On 18 March 2003, Tim Cross deployed to Kuwait with Garner, the retired military officer at the head of ORHA.⁸⁸⁶ They flew into Baghdad in a military plane in the dead of the night from 21 to 22 April.⁸⁸⁷ Day to day life in Baghdad initially proved very difficult.⁸⁸⁸ ORHA also had little resources, including not enough people.⁸⁸⁹ It was only set up in January 2003, after it had become clear that CENTCOM planning for the post-war phase was insufficient (and indeed some sources suggest that commander Franks did not consider it his task at all).⁸⁹⁰ Garner was subordinate to Franks and struggled to influence the plans of the US military.⁸⁹¹

⁸⁸⁰ Ibid., 1-2.

⁸⁸¹ Ibid., 10, 13-14, 16, 18.

Cross, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 7 December 2009", 42, 65.

Chakrabarti, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 56.

Cross, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry: 'Post-Invasion Iraq: The Planning and the Reality After the Invasion From Mid-2002 to the End of August 2003.'", 18, 23-25.

⁸⁸² Synnott, Lamb, and Stewart, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 9 December 2009 (First Session)", 6, 44-45.

⁸⁸³ Ibid., 13-14.

⁸⁸⁴ Ibid., 27.

Chilcott, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 37.

Hoon, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 19 January 2010", 90-91, 114.

⁸⁸⁵ Ibid., 86.

⁸⁸⁶ Cross, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry: 'Post-Invasion Iraq: The Planning and the Reality After the Invasion From Mid-2002 to the End of August 2003.'", 15.

⁸⁸⁷ Ibid., 20.

⁸⁸⁸ Alderson, *Bankrolling Basra*, 43.

⁸⁸⁹ Cross, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry: 'Post-Invasion Iraq: The Planning and the Reality After the Invasion From Mid-2002 to the End of August 2003.'", 22, 24.

⁸⁹⁰ Woodward, *State of Denial*, no page (Kindle book).

⁸⁹¹ Ibid., 19, 23.

Tim Cross was struggling to play his role too. The American Garner had asked Cross to be his Coalition Deputy (Cross ended up being 'International Deputy' as he himself felt that would more accurately portray the need for multilateral cooperation).⁸⁹² The problem was that until a few weeks before ORHA flew into Baghdad, the United Kingdom had not even officially confirmed that it *had* someone in ORHA; and it took until 14 April 2003 for London to confirm that Cross was with the organization.⁸⁹³ It had been debating the political and, perhaps more important still, the legal implications of explicitly being involved in ORHA.⁸⁹⁴ Reconstruction of Iraq was, after all, illegal without a further Security Council resolution if it meant reorganizing the institutions of Iraq.

There were other things London was unwilling to consider. Garner wanted a British-led ORHA presence in Basra as soon as possible, but Whitehall refused to agree to this, apparently for fear of the costs that would entail.⁸⁹⁵ London also failed to give Tim Cross help more generally. He was not given either a budget or people, although he managed to get some informal help through personal contacts.⁸⁹⁶ Despite repeated and urgent requests, he also was not getting any guidance on what course of action to take beyond the guideline that he should *not* commit London to anything.⁸⁹⁷ Requests to the capital often went without response.⁸⁹⁸

On 16 April 2003, Franks established the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA). In May 2003, the ineffectual Jay Garner was called back to the United States, less than a month after he had arrived in Baghdad. Under-resourced, ignored by the military and undermined by Washington, Garner had failed to achieve much. In the eyes of Tim Cross, Garner was 'hung out to dry'.⁸⁹⁹ His successor L. Paul Bremer, was given a broader mandate. He did not rapport

⁸⁹² Cross, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry: 'Post-Invasion Iraq: The Planning and the Reality After the Invasion From Mid-2002 to the End of August 2003.'", 17.

Cross, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 7 December 2009", 40-41.

⁸⁹³ Cross, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry: 'Post-Invasion Iraq: The Planning and the Reality After the Invasion From Mid-2002 to the End of August 2003.'", 17-18.

⁸⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 18.

Cross, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 7 December 2009", 33, 72.

⁸⁹⁵ Cross, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry: 'Post-Invasion Iraq: The Planning and the Reality After the Invasion From Mid-2002 to the End of August 2003.'", 19.

Cross, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 7 December 2009", 43-44, 62.

⁸⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 72.

Cross, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry: 'Post-Invasion Iraq: The Planning and the Reality After the Invasion From Mid-2002 to the End of August 2003.'", 18, 23.

⁸⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 17-18, 20, 22-24.

Cross, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 7 December 2009", 41-42, 44, 55-56, 62.

⁸⁹⁸ Cross, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry: 'Post-Invasion Iraq: The Planning and the Reality After the Invasion From Mid-2002 to the End of August 2003.'", 19.

⁸⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 24.

to Franks, but rather directly to Rumsfeld, and was given substantial more freedom.⁹⁰⁰ ORHA was quickly subsumed into the CPA, which received most of the conditions that Garner would have wanted or needed: it was backed by Washington; it (eventually) had resources, both monetary and people; Bremer had much wider authority and from the beginning demanded civil-military colocation.⁹⁰¹

This was seen as a new start. In London, the Iraq Policy/Planning Unit and the Overseas Development Secretariat, who had started working on a new strategy as ORHA was seen to be failing, shelved their plans to follow the CPA lead.⁹⁰² On 8 May, a few days before Bremer, John Sawers of the British Foreign Office arrived in Baghdad.⁹⁰³ The Department for International Development, which had been reluctant to engage with ORHA (for reasons discussed later), deployed more staff.⁹⁰⁴ Still in May, Lieutenant General Frederick 'Freddie' Viggers arrived in Baghdad to serve as the senior British Military Representative and American Lieutenant General Sanchez' deputy.⁹⁰⁵ Viggers did not command the British troops (who were in Basra); he worked on the 'military aspects of the reconstruction plan' of the CPA, functioning as the link between the civilian and military parts of the CPA.⁹⁰⁶

The working of the CPA improved over its first few months. Initially 'some of the civilian agencies inside the CPA were suspicious of, and did not see/understand how the military could contribute'.⁹⁰⁷ The Coalition Provisional Authority faced many of the problems ORHA had: it was trying 'to achieve multiple and un-sequenced missions, all at the same time: build itself; try to run the country day-to-day; kick start the economy; deliver 'democracy'; maintain security within the country and along its borders; deal with increasing terrorist and criminal activity; create confidence in the international effort among Iraqi organisations and on the street. Iraqis were impatient and suspicious'.⁹⁰⁸

However, with Bremer's new freedom of mandate came three unexpected and controversial decisions. Within days of arriving, Bremer announced that he would slow down the political

⁹⁰⁰ Feith, *War and Decision*, 422-423.

⁹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 25.

Cross, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 7 December 2009", 64.

⁹⁰² Bowen, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 7 December 2009", 40.

⁹⁰³ Cross, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry: 'Post-Invasion Iraq: The Planning and the Reality After the Invasion From Mid-2002 to the End of August 2003.'", 24-25.

Chaplin and Ricketts, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 1 December 2009", 91.

⁹⁰⁴ Chakrabarti, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 36-37.

⁹⁰⁵ Viggers, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry", 1.

⁹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 5.

process; thoroughly debaathify the civil service; and disband the Iraqi army.⁹⁰⁹ Washington did not consult London, and Bremer ignored British protest in the capital.⁹¹⁰ There are good arguments for all of these decisions (although not *per se* the reasons that Bremer gave). In dealing with an already complicated and fragile security situation, one clear authority can be easier than a democratic process involving multiple groups and individuals with little experience of the process and wildly diverging interests and concerns. According to Bremer, debaathification proved very 'popular' with Iraqis, although many British commentators felt that to be an inappropriate criterion.⁹¹¹ Given that most of the Iraqi army had vanished during the war, its unprofessionalism, and its close ties to the old regime, starting anew seemed logical.⁹¹² Nonetheless, the problems with these decisions later became abundantly clear, as discussed later. In any case, London had nothing to say about the policy at this point.

The American military had its hands full in Baghdad and expected the British to handle the Southern provinces.⁹¹³ On the British side, there was 'a feeling that Basra was on the shelf, that is, was inadequately equipped with security and financial resources and hardware'⁹¹⁴. The British expected money from Baghdad, but getting any money down proved difficult.⁹¹⁵ There were several reasons. Requests for money that had to go through military channels took a long time; people in Baghdad were stretched to the limit and responding to a request from elsewhere unlikely to be a priority; and often there were bureaucratic procedures and transparency guarantees that needed to be followed.⁹¹⁶

The Americans on the ground also felt that Basra was in the British Area of Responsibility and therefore London's financial responsibility.⁹¹⁷ They did not want to hear bad news.⁹¹⁸ British repeated public boasting about the 'exemplary South' also annoyed those in

⁹⁰⁹ Coalition Provisional Authority, *Coalition Provisional Authority Regulation Number 1*, 2003, http://govinfo.library.unt.edu/cpa-iraq/regulations/20030516_CPAREG_1_The_Coalition_Provisional_Authority_.pdf.

Cross, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 7 December 2009", 67.

⁹¹⁰ Ibid., 67.

Hoon, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 19 January 2010", 161-162.

⁹¹¹ Chakrabarti, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 42-43, 64.

⁹¹² Hoon, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 19 January 2010", 161-162.

⁹¹³ Synnott, Lamb, and Stewart, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 9 December 2009 (First Session)", 6, 27, 29, 44-45.

⁹¹⁴ Ibid., 10.

⁹¹⁵ Ibid., 18.

⁹¹⁶ Michael Walker, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 1 February 2010," 2010, 20.

Hoon, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 19 January 2010", 186.

Nigel Sheinwald, John Sawers, and Desmond Bowen, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 16 December 2009," 2009, www.iraqinquiry.org.uk, 61.

⁹¹⁷ Synnott, Lamb, and Stewart, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 9 December 2009 (First Session)", 27.

⁹¹⁸ Ibid., 18.

Baghdad.⁹¹⁹ Not only was the South easier for security, but the United States were paying for that exemplary region that Britain so eagerly took credit for.⁹²⁰ When an American congressional delegation visited the South, British officer Lamb said the South needed a 20 billion (currency unclear) investment.⁹²¹ American 'vice-roi' Bremer was infuriated.⁹²² But British frustration with the Americans too grew. The American Coalition Provisional Authority set up an office in the South, but by August 2003 the British had written that off as completely ineffective.⁹²³ One person likened it to 'dancing with a broken doll', 'making you look rather stupid'.⁹²⁴

The situation in the United Kingdom

Those on the ground in Iraq were reporting back to London on a regular or semi-regular basis (communication was difficult and they were very busy) but doing so was, in their eyes, somewhat akin to sending a signal into space.⁹²⁵ There was no proper structure to receive that information, let alone act on it.⁹²⁶ The Iraq Planning/Policy Unit, which was nominally responsible for Iraq policy, still existed and after the invasion became the 'processing centre for sending secondees out to Iraq' – a process that usually took several months and still failed to deliver as many qualified people as were needed.⁹²⁷ However, there was no central political authority to take charge and still 'no coalition civil-military plan for the post invasion phase'.⁹²⁸ Clear objectives, a definition of success, a desired end state were all still missing.⁹²⁹

⁹¹⁹ Ibid., 12-13, 27, 29.

⁹²⁰ Ibid., 12-13.

⁹²¹ Ibid., 18.

⁹²² Ibid., 18.

Walker, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 1 February 2010", 65.

⁹²³ Synnott, Lamb, and Stewart, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 9 December 2009 (First Session)", 14.

⁹²⁴ Ibid., 16.

⁹²⁵ Ibid., 7.

Cross, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 7 December 2009", 52.

Bowen, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 7 December 2009", 38.

Cross, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry: 'Post-Invasion Iraq: The Planning and the Reality After the Invasion From Mid-2002 to the End of August 2003.'", 21-23.

⁹²⁶ Viggers, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry", 3, 6.

Synnott, Lamb, and Stewart, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 9 December 2009 (First Session)", 49-50.

Chakrabarti, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 53-55.

Hoon, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 19 January 2010", 92.

⁹²⁷ Cross, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry: 'Post-Invasion Iraq: The Planning and the Reality After the Invasion From Mid-2002 to the End of August 2003.'", 18.

Chilcott, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 43.

Synnott, Lamb, and Stewart, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 9 December 2009 (First Session)", 19-20.

⁹²⁸ Viggers, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry", 3, 6.

Chakrabarti, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 53-55.

Burridge and Brims, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 50.

So were any machinery or established processes to address those issues.⁹³⁰ Lines of responsibility were confused.⁹³¹ Without a senior official or minister in charge, policy thus was slow and incoherent.⁹³² Most people involved expected the Cabinet Office to provide coherence, but the Cabinet Committee for External Affairs (DOP), which would have been the logical choice, did not meet at all in the months after the invasion.⁹³³

Moreover, now that the strictly military phase was over, the military expected the Foreign Office to take the policy lead.⁹³⁴ Instead, they observed a 'trend of a refusal or unwillingness by the UK to engage pro-actively and confidently throughout this time'.⁹³⁵ The Foreign Office was following the American plan rather than critiquing it. To the Foreign Office, that was the only option as Britain was but a junior partner and would not make its own fate.⁹³⁶ The Foreign Office was also busy negotiating the post-war Security Council resolution, which was passed as Resolution 1483 on 22 May.⁹³⁷

By contrast, the ad hoc Group on Iraqi Rehabilitation did start meeting weekly. This ministerial group formed around 10 April.⁹³⁸ They debated whether to focus on Basra or Baghdad.⁹³⁹ From the perspective of the British in Baghdad, they focused too much on Basra

Synnott, Lamb, and Stewart, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 9 December 2009 (First Session)", 49-50, 53-54.

Hoon, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 19 January 2010", 87-88.

⁹²⁹ Viggers, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry", 3.

⁹³⁰ Ibid., 3.

⁹³¹ Ibid., 3.

⁹³² Synnott, Lamb, and Stewart, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 9 December 2009 (First Session)", 53-54.

⁹³³ Chakrabarti, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 52.

Hoon, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 19 January 2010", 180-181.

⁹³⁴ Nicholas Macpherson, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry: HM Treasury Involvement in Iraq," January 15, 2010, 7.

Buck, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry", 3.

Paul Kernaghan, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry," June 9, 2010, 5.

Sawers, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 10 December 2009", 19

Mike Jackson, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 28 July 2010," 2010, 25.

Gordon Brown, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 5 March 2010," 2010, 99.

Glenn Torpy, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 18 January 2011," 2011, 45.

Pattison, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 31 January 2011 (Morning Session)", 106.

Straw, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 February 2011", 49.

Stephen White, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 21 July 2010," 2010, 34.

Paul Kernaghan, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 23 July 2010," 2010, 17.

⁹³⁵ Cross, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry: 'Post-Invasion Iraq: The Planning and the Reality After the Invasion From Mid-2002 to the End of August 2003.'", 25.

⁹³⁶ Chilcott, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 18.

⁹³⁷ UN Security Council, "Security Council Resolution 1483," *S/RES/1483*, 2003.

⁹³⁸ Bowen, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 7 December 2009", 26.

⁹³⁹ Cross, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 7 December 2009", 63.

Chilcott, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 41-42.

Hoon, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 19 January 2010", 172-173.

and not on the coordination of broader coalition plans.⁹⁴⁰ Defence Secretary Hoon agrees that he focused mostly on Basra, as that was where the British military was.⁹⁴¹ The troops in Basra, however, felt they were given promises, but never any follow-up to those promises.⁹⁴² As ‘the security situation got worse in Baghdad’, the British discussed reinforcing the capital, possibly militarily.⁹⁴³ The British kept its military in the south but sent the Foreign Office’s Sawers and Greenstock to Baghdad.⁹⁴⁴

3. ASSUMPTIONS VERSUS REALITY: A COMPARISON

How does this reality compare to the assumptions underpinning British planning? To recapitulate, in the last chapter we teased out the following assumptions in Whitehall planning for the aftermath:

- “We will not ‘trash the joint’ and we will keep the army and existing infrastructure” (MOD)
- “The civilians will come in and take over soon after Phase III” (MOD)
- “Other countries will shoulder large parts of the burden” (MOD)
- “The UN will play a central role after the invasion” (MOD)
- “We will work within a legal framework” (DFID)
- “We need a relatively stable security environment to do our work” (DFID)
- “We will work by inserting money into the international system” (DFID)
- “We will obtain international support and legitimacy before going into Iraq” (DFID)
- “The United Nations will have a lead role in post-invasion Iraq” (DFID)
- “The United Nations have a leading role in the post-war phase... hopefully” (FCO)
- “We will maintain the Iraqi police forces” & “We will get international police forces in” (FCO)
- “The Iraqi administration will easily switch into a new administration” (FCO)

Comparing those assumptions to the reality on the ground, two types of unjustified premises become clear. Firstly, Whitehall departments hold mutually contradictory views about their own and each other’s roles, intentions, constraints, and capacity. This is particularly true for

⁹⁴⁰ Viggers, “Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry”, 4.

⁹⁴¹ Hoon, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 19 January 2010”, 98, 172.

⁹⁴² Synnott, Lamb, and Stewart, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 9 December 2009 (First Session)”, 15, 20, 48-49.

⁹⁴³ Cross, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 7 December 2009”, 63.

⁹⁴⁴ Ibid., 63.

the military and the Department for International Development. Secondly, there are overly optimistic assumptions about third parties: the United Nations, other states, and the Iraqi civil service, military, and society. In total, these misguided assumptions and the plans that follow from them amount to a shamble, an incoherent preparation that in May 2003 was not even ready for itself, let alone for the difficult situation in post-invasion Iraq.

Waiting for the civilians: 1 (UK) Division

Assumption: The civilians will come in and take over soon after Phase III

Reality: The military was on its own in the weeks after the invasion, compelled to do many activities it had not planned for and did not have the expertise for

The military very much felt let down by other Whitehall departments: 'my impression was that Whitehall was uncertain of where to go from there, and I sensed that the FCO felt it better not to be implicated too much in what was happening – rather let the MOD get it wrong!'⁹⁴⁵ The impression of DFID was that they were 'in their tents', following their 'mood of the moment', not doing anything (this will be discussed later).⁹⁴⁶ In general, the commanders felt that their troops were risking their lives while the rest of the government was not on war footing and not doing its share.⁹⁴⁷ The Ministry of Defence very much expected the 'civilians that we had been promised' to arrive.⁹⁴⁸ We will have to wait until the relevant documents have been released to understand who promised them and under what conditions; certainly DFID had a very different interpretations and when and under what conditions they were expected.⁹⁴⁹

From the military's perspective, the post-war situation was not their job.⁹⁵⁰ The military headquarters 'was an operational level military campaign headquarters. This was not military stuff. This was broader stuff'.⁹⁵¹ The assumption in the military plans was a quick transition to peacekeeping and nation-building, for which the Ministry of Defence would not

⁹⁴⁵ Cross, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry: 'Post-Invasion Iraq: The Planning and the Reality After the Invasion From Mid-2002 to the End of August 2003.'", 23.

⁹⁴⁶ Viggers, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry", 7.

Short, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 February 2010", 94.

Chakrabarti, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 38.

⁹⁴⁷ Burrage and Brims, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 50.

⁹⁴⁸ Hoon, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 19 January 2010", 95, 106-107.

⁹⁴⁹ Ibid., 90-91, 93, 95, 104-106, 114, 168-170.

⁹⁵⁰ Viggers, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry", 6.

Cross, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 7 December 2009", 56.1

Hoon, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 19 January 2010", 90-91, 104, 114, 168-170, 183.

⁹⁵¹ Cross, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 7 December 2009", 56.

be the lead department.⁹⁵² In reality, the other departments were slow to send people. The British troops in the South initially had only one DFID representative.⁹⁵³ By 9 May – weeks after the end of hostilities – 34 volunteers were under training; the first batch of 22 civilians were only going out on 13 May.⁹⁵⁴

Yet there was an obvious urgent need for action beyond war-fighting and controlling the country in a narrow, military sense. The life of the Iraqi people needed to improve quickly to maintain their relative consent (or at least non-opposition) to the British presence. At the very least, life should not get worse; but of course, there had just been a war, there was little clarity about the future; Iraqi civil servants were no longer getting paid now that the old regime had disappeared; there was widespread looting; and in this uncertain situation, criminality thrived. Many of those who had been in high functions under the old regime had disappeared, leaving a power and knowledge vacuum that could not easily be filled by the British, unfamiliar as they were with local structures, tensions, and social hierarchies.

The military thus suddenly found itself ‘severely stretched’, handling many issues ‘which we were not structured or resourced for’.⁹⁵⁵ ‘Too many tasks were laid on the military without the resources or authority to deliver’, and they were of a mind-boggling variety.⁹⁵⁶ In addition to looking for weapons of mass destruction, addressing criminality, mopping up resistance, handling prisoners, and maintaining general security, the military was asked for help with such practical issues as sorting out payment problems (as the Central Bank had stopped functioning) and making sure crops could be planted. The troops lacked the appropriate specialist knowledge, as well as the manpower.

The military was given £10 million for ‘quick impact project’ in order to quickly improve Iraqi’s lives, but by 15 May 2003 only £50,000 – half a percent – of that money had been spent.⁹⁵⁷ Part of the problem was that ‘the MOD probably lacked a strong kind of DFID component to help it identify the sort of things it could spend its money on’.⁹⁵⁸ DFID’s Permanent Secretary at the time Chakrabarti later told the Iraq Inquiry that the Ministry of

⁹⁵² Hoon, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 19 January 2010”, 103.

⁹⁵³ Burridge and Brims, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009”, 49.

⁹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 49.

⁹⁵⁵ Synnott, Lamb, and Stewart, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 9 December 2009 (First Session)”, 17, 35-37, 46-47, 60.

⁹⁵⁶ Viggers, “Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry.”

⁹⁵⁷ Chilcott, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009”, 37.

⁹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 37.

Defence were right to expect more civil military advisors, but also points out that they probably would have got them quicker if DFID had been involved in the planning earlier.⁹⁵⁹

Tony Blair has said that if people would have told him at the time that they needed more resources, they would have been given those resources.⁹⁶⁰ This seems to be in line with what officials report: there was a lot of official and theoretical support.⁹⁶¹ The problem was the delivery, which was either non-existent or slow.⁹⁶² Part of the reason was doubtlessly that no senior civil servant or minister was clearly in charge of Iraq policy on a day-to-day basis.⁹⁶³ As a result, incredibly as it might seem for such an important issue, it seemed to fall between the cracks. Much of Whitehall's attention was also focused on the Security Council, where London needed to get a Security Council Resolution to be able to rebuild and reorganize Iraq. This repeated praise without backing from London led to a lot of frustration on the ground: as one person put it, 'when are you going to produce the goods?'⁹⁶⁴ It seemed a question that everyone struggled to answer.

What Do You Expect Me to Do About That? Department for International Development

Assumption: War is weeks or months away

Reality: The invasion was over by April 2003

Assumption: We work within a legal framework

Reality: The military expected the civilians to come on as soon as the fighting was over

Assumption: The United Nations have a leading role

Reality: The United States, not the United Nations, provided the civilian authority

The invasion took the Department for International Development by surprise. The United Nations route had rather suddenly been abandoned, against the reassurances that Tony Blair had been giving the department's Secretary of State. Yet based on these reassurances and on

⁹⁵⁹ Chakrabarti, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 41.

⁹⁶⁰ Blair, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 29 January 2010", 192.

⁹⁶¹ Synnott, Lamb, and Stewart, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 9 December 2009 (First Session)", 15, 20, 48-49.

⁹⁶² Ibid., 15, 20, 48-49.

⁹⁶³ Viggers, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry", 6.

Synnott, Lamb, and Stewart, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 9 December 2009 (First Session)", 50, 53-54.

Chakrabarti, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 53-55.

Hoon, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 19 January 2010", 92.

⁹⁶⁴ Synnott, Lamb, and Stewart, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 9 December 2009 (First Session)", 16.

the (correct) assessment that there had been no recent change in Baghdad's behaviour that made war particularly urgent, DFID had assumed that any invasion, if it would happen at all, was weeks or months away. The invasion itself lasted shorter – and was much easier – than had been projected. Thus, the Department for International Development had a role to play in the conflict much earlier than it had envisaged. It was not ready to do so. By the time of the invasion, the department had a handful of representatives in various organisations: only from June on did DFID staff come in greater numbers, 'woefully late' in the eyes of the military.⁹⁶⁵

DFID still expected the United Nations to have the lead role in the aftermath of the conflict.⁹⁶⁶ 'We did not think ORHA – because we were still heavily believing in UN leadership of this post-conflict effort, we didn't think ORHA would be actually the lead in terms of post-conflict work. We thought the UN would take that role on. The UN was geared up to do so, putting more staff into Iraq at the time'.⁹⁶⁷ DFID is used to working with the United Nations. It was told – reassured – it would work with the United Nations in post-conflict Iraq, so immediately after the conflict it was behaving under that assumption.⁹⁶⁸

That does not mean that DFID did not pay any attention to the American-led ORHA at all. It was under pressure to work with ORHA, not least from the military and people on the ground. From DFID's perspective, working with ORHA was illogical. For one, it was illegal.⁹⁶⁹ Regardless of the legality of the invasion itself, an occupying force is not allowed to fundamentally change the laws or structures of the territory it is occupying. In other words, DFID 'cannot do reconstruction if it means reorganising the institutions of Iraq,' which is what the Americans set out to do.⁹⁷⁰ Tim Cross is thus right when he observes that DFID had a 'strong reluctance to formally support ORHA.'⁹⁷¹ However, this was more than a fickle 'mood of the moment,' as MOD people saw it.

⁹⁶⁵ Cross, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry: 'Post-Invasion Iraq: The Planning and the Reality After the Invasion From Mid-2002 to the End of August 2003.'", 25.

⁹⁶⁶ Chakrabarti, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 33-34.

Short, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 February 2010", 89.

⁹⁶⁷ Chakrabarti, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 33-34.

⁹⁶⁸ Short, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 February 2010", 87-89.

Chakrabarti, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009." *33-34, 36-37.

⁹⁶⁹ Cross, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 7 December 2009", 65.

Chakrabarti, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 35.

Chilcott, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 45-46.

Bowen, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 7 December 2009", 24, 49.

⁹⁷⁰ Short, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 February 2010", 86, 89.

⁹⁷¹ Cross, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry: 'Post-Invasion Iraq: The Planning and the Reality After the Invasion From Mid-2002 to the End of August 2003.'", 18.

The Department for International Development sent out Moazzam Malik to ORHA.⁹⁷² Malik reported back that ORHA was a disaster.⁹⁷³ DFID then decided to liaise with the organization but work outside it.⁹⁷⁴ When the Prime Minister wanted to strengthen ORHA by seconding about 100 people to it, DFID's top officials felt that adding more people into a dysfunctional structure would only add to the chaos.⁹⁷⁵ Not willing to take reporting responsibility for a plan that it judged hopeless, DFID passed on both the money and the responsibility for those reinforcements to the Foreign Office.⁹⁷⁶ The Department for International Development itself maintained only one liaison person in the organization.⁹⁷⁷

Meanwhile, the department tried to respond to the needs on the ground as they arose.⁹⁷⁸ However, it struggled for lack of resources.⁹⁷⁹ As detailed in the last chapter, in February 2003, DFID got allocated extra funding for Iraq for the first time, £10 million.⁹⁸⁰ The Ministry of Defence had received £30 million for post-conflict humanitarian work.⁹⁸¹ For comparison, the Treasury had estimated the post-conflict costs at perhaps £60 million a month for Britain.⁹⁸² DFID tried to compensate this lack of extra resources by reprioritising its core funding – the department's yearly contingency reserve was virtually depleted by April – and allocating another £65 million to Iraq.⁹⁸³ DFID only got allocated substantial extra resources – £120 million – on 27 March, a week after the invasion had started.⁹⁸⁴ With everything happening at such short notice, there was the additional problem of spending that much money in such a short period of time: by the middle of March 2003, only £17 million of the money received by DFID had been allocated to agencies.⁹⁸⁵

⁹⁷² Short, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 February 2010", 89, 92.

⁹⁷³ Ibid., 89, 92.

⁹⁷⁴ Ibid., 89, 92.

⁹⁷⁵ Ibid., 91.

Chakrabarti, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 42.

⁹⁷⁶ Short, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 February 2010", 91.

⁹⁷⁷ Chakrabarti, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 34.

⁹⁷⁸ Short, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 February 2010", 91-92.

Hoon, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 19 January 2010", 94.

⁹⁷⁹ Short, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 February 2010", 102.

Cross, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 7 December 2009", 65.

⁹⁸⁰ Keeble, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry", 2.

⁹⁸¹ Ibid., 2.

⁹⁸² Ibid., 2.

⁹⁸³ Ibid., 2.

⁹⁸⁴ Another source says it was slightly later, in April.

Chakrabarti, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 30.

Keeble, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry", 2.

⁹⁸⁵ Ibid., 2.

In summary, there was not enough money – the total cost for post-conflict reconstruction was estimated at be £1,200-2,600 million⁹⁸⁶, not enough time to allocate that money, and few organizations on the ground in Iraq who could have been funded with it. DFID was waiting for the United Nations to arrive to lead reconstruction, and to allow it to channel its funds to international organizations, the department's usual way of working.⁹⁸⁷ It could not start reconstructing via ORHA or the CPA for legal reasons and preferred to not be involved with ORHA in general for that organization was profoundly dysfunctional.⁹⁸⁸ Faced with those circumstances, DFID focused on what it felt it could do, which essentially was only humanitarian work.⁹⁸⁹

Only in May 2003 did it become clear to DFID that CPA would, in fact, remain the lead civilian organization in Iraq.⁹⁹⁰ It was clear from the language in Security Council resolution 1483, which acknowledged the United States and the United Kingdom as de facto occupiers of Iraq, and had very little to say about a role for the United Nations.⁹⁹¹ This final confirmation that the United Nations would not be central to Iraq's recovery triggered Clare Short's resignation from government.⁹⁹² It also signalled to her department that working with the Americans would be the only option; and from May 2003 the department indeed started strengthening the Coalition Provisional Authority.⁹⁹³ In the same month, it also published a new strategy, the Humanitarian & Rehabilitation Strategy.⁹⁹⁴

Welcome to Help (Only): United Nations and the International Community

Assumption: The United Nations will have a leading role

Reality: The United Nations was largely side-lined

⁹⁸⁶ Ibid., 2.

⁹⁸⁷ Chakrabarti, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 33-34.
Short, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 February 2010", 89.

⁹⁸⁸ Cross, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 7 December 2009", 65.
Chakrabarti, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 35, 42.

Bowen, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 7 December 2009", 24, 49.

Chilcott, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 45-46.

Short, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 February 2010", 86, 89.

⁹⁸⁹ Chakrabarti, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 20.

Short, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 February 2010", 91-92, 102.

⁹⁹⁰ Chakrabarti, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 34-37.

⁹⁹¹ Ibid., 34-37.

⁹⁹² Short, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 February 2010", 81-83.

Chakrabarti, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 34, 36-37.

⁹⁹³ Ibid., 34, 36-37.

⁹⁹⁴ Ibid., 36.

Assumption: Other countries will shoulder large parts of the burden

Reality: Other countries were reluctant to contribute to the American-British presence in Iraq

Throughout Whitehall, the assumption had been that the United Nations would have a central role in the reconstruction of Iraq. This held true even though the Republican American administration was ideologically rather opposed to the concept of the United Nations for several reasons. First, the intensity of that opposition varied widely from person to person and department to department. Many American policy-makers and civil servants were rather in favour of the United Nations (notably in the State Department). The United Nations in the same period was also leading on Afghanistan, which had already been invaded, so in that sense, too, 'it wasn't ridiculous to think we might be able to persuade Bush to do the same' for Iraq.⁹⁹⁵ Most importantly though, Blair had reassured Cabinet and public repeatedly that the United Nations route was an absolute condition for British participation in American-lead action.⁹⁹⁶ That, combined with the implicit but real idea that it would be hard if not impossible to make the invasion work without the United Nations – and why invade if doomed to fail? – sufficed to consolidate the planning assumption of a UN presence.

A United Nations presence in post-war Iraq would matter in at least three different ways. For one, the United Nations would bring in its people and expertise to help with the reconstruction of the country. Although 'it takes the UN time to gear up'⁹⁹⁷ (but clearly, it also took a while before the United States and the United Kingdom were geared up), the organization has a good track record of doing reconstruction as well as coordinating it.⁹⁹⁸ Secondly, the United Nations could lead the political process in a credible way. By contrast, the United States and its junior partner were nations, who would more easily be suspected of ulterior (selfish) motives, as well as a party de facto involved in the political processes in Iraq: it would be hard for them to be player and referee simultaneously.⁹⁹⁹ Lastly, the United Nations flag would bring with it international legitimacy and therefore help from other countries, both monetary help and the sending of troops and civilian experts.¹⁰⁰⁰

By the time the invasion began, the centre of gravity within Washington had shifted to the Pentagon – and the people now chiefly in charge felt little for a substantive United Nations role. The United Nations was liaising, and it was also contributing to the provision of

⁹⁹⁵ Short, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 February 2010", 87.

⁹⁹⁶ Ibid., 87-88.

⁹⁹⁷ Bowen, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 7 December 2009", 47.

⁹⁹⁸ Chakrabarti, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 62.

⁹⁹⁹ Short, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 February 2010", 114-116.

¹⁰⁰⁰ Ibid., 99.

humanitarian aid, as were NGOs. It was also willing and waiting to take on its 'proper role'.¹⁰⁰¹ Of course, such a full role for the United Nations would still not have meant running Iraq on a day-to-day basis: the United Nations does not have that capacity.¹⁰⁰² But it would have been in the lead, bringing in expertise and resources as well as coordination and leadership. However, 'that proper role... wasn't on offer'.¹⁰⁰³ This became abundantly clear when Bremer arrived.

To be clear, President Bush, in a press conference after the Hillsborough meeting of 7-8 April 2003, had conceded a 'vital' role to the United Nations, much to the relief of London.¹⁰⁰⁴ But he meant vital in the most literal and limited sense: keep Iraqi people alive.¹⁰⁰⁵ It was 'allowed in' to contribute, but in a significantly weaker function than it is usually involved. This 'coordinator' role it was now given was, in Short's words, 'pretty insulting and hopeless'.¹⁰⁰⁶ It did not allow the United Nations to improve the situation in a meaningful way.¹⁰⁰⁷ The organization was still expected to work alongside or under the United States, and in any case, would be overruled by Washington.

The net results were considerable resentment within both the United Nations community and other states, as well as an inability to reconstruct. As the United States continued to fail to bring the security situation under control, the United Nations Secretary-General's Special Representative in Iraq – he initially did not want to do the job and neither did the Secretary-General want him to take it – was killed in August 2003 in Baghdad.¹⁰⁰⁸ This was the signal for the United Nations to leave the country.¹⁰⁰⁹ Without the United Nations playing its usual role, the reconstruction plans that London and Washington – shoddy to begin with – became even less substantial.

The estrangement from the intergovernmental organization had wider repercussions too: the reservations of countries around the world about the American-British invasion grew even stronger. At the end of March 2003, the United Nations launched a flash appeal for Iraq for \$2,200 million (earlier appeals had amounted to \$123 million).¹⁰¹⁰ In fact, this was close to the British estimates of the cost of reconstruction (between £1,200-2,600 million). However,

¹⁰⁰¹ Ibid., 115-116.

¹⁰⁰² Ibid., 115.

¹⁰⁰³ Ibid., 115-116.

¹⁰⁰⁴ Chilcott, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 55.

¹⁰⁰⁵ Ibid., 16.

¹⁰⁰⁶ Short, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 February 2010", 101.

¹⁰⁰⁷ Ibid., 101.

¹⁰⁰⁸ Ibid., 101, 116.

¹⁰⁰⁹ Andy Bearpark, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 6 July 2010," 2010, 28-29.

¹⁰¹⁰ Keeble, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry", 2.

states around the world were unhappy to pay for (what they perceived as) the bad Anglo-American decisions: by the end of April 2003 only 18% of the necessary money had been raised.¹⁰¹¹ Only by including Oil for Food money was 88% of the goal met later that year.¹⁰¹² Nations were not only reluctant to pay; they were also waiting for a strong United Nations in the aftermath. Japan, India, and Egypt all let London know that they would come into Iraq once a strong United Nations presence was established.¹⁰¹³

The British Treasury had hoped and assumed all along that other nations would pay for the reconstruction of Iraq; and in any case many people in Whitehall seemed to fail to grasp how many resources would be required to rebuild a country.¹⁰¹⁴ The Treasury's assumption by and large turned out correct. However, most of the money was raised well after the invasion (of course, not all the money was needed immediately either) and *spending* the money was as much of a problem as raising it.¹⁰¹⁵ A lack of clarity on the ground, unsuitable bureaucratic rules, and a worsening security situation – which meant that more money had to be spent on security, to the detriment of reconstruction – all meant that reconstruction was slow and uneven. Huge sums were diverted to tendered contracts (of American companies, not employing the Iraqi population in need of jobs and with local knowledge of needs) that did not come to fruition.¹⁰¹⁶ When commanders on the ground needed resources, they often could not get them.

United Nations' involvement was also supposed to help the political process, which was a crucial part of the wider objectives for Iraq, which was to become a stable, reliable neighbour and a democracy too. However, when Bremer took over from Garner as the 'vice-roi' of Baghdad, one of the first changes he implemented was a drastic slow-down of the political process.¹⁰¹⁷ Garner had communicated to both the Kurds and formerly exiled Iraqis his intention 'to hand sovereignty to you by about July and August time'.¹⁰¹⁸ Whereas London believed that the political process *had* to be Iraqi-owned to be successful, Bremer wanted Iraqis involved 'always on a consultative basis rather than actually handing over executive

¹⁰¹¹ Keeble, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 5 July 2010", 26.

¹⁰¹² *Ibid.*, 26.

¹⁰¹³ Short, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 February 2010", 99.

¹⁰¹⁴ Synnott, Lamb, and Stewart, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 9 December 2009 (First Session)", 27. Cross, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 7 December 2009", 58.

¹⁰¹⁵ Synnott, Lamb, and Stewart, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 9 December 2009 (First Session)", 45.

¹⁰¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 30, 76, 79.

¹⁰¹⁷ Cross, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry: 'Post-Invasion Iraq: The Planning and the Reality After the Invasion From Mid-2002 to the End of August 2003.'", 25.

¹⁰¹⁸ Cross, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 7 December 2009", 51.

power'.¹⁰¹⁹ This drawn-out political process not only was itself against planning expectations; it also was one of the causes of Britain staying much longer than it had planned, which in turn also breached assumptions.

Getting the Country Up and Running: Iraqi Civil Service & Police Forces

Assumption: We will not trash the joint and keep Iraq intact

Reality: Although the Coalition forces did not 'trash the joint', they also did not prevent looting

Assumption: We will be able to keep the peace and draw down force levels after the conflict

Reality: Force levels were too low to keep the peace and drawdown had to be postponed

Assumption: The Iraqi administration will easily switch to a new regime

Reality: The Iraqi administration was thoroughly debaathified and had to be rebuild

Assumption: We will maintain the Iraqi police forces and get international forces in

Reality: The Iraqi police was not up to the task and there were not enough international forces

The problems with the Iraqi civil service post-invasion are well documented. Before the war, Britain as well as the United Nations had assumed that 'Iraq was in many ways an efficiently run state with a functioning civil service' and that 'technocrats who had served Saddam would switch easily into serving a new administration'.¹⁰²⁰ Yet, '[a]s in most other areas in Iraq, once the fighting stopped, virtually all levels of Iraqi government in and around [Basra] simple ceased to exist.'¹⁰²¹ Baghdad's ministries stopped functioning. People vanished from their places of work: 'Many civil servants and key ministers fled – worried they might be implicated in Saddam's crimes or become targets for retribution by disgruntled fellow

¹⁰¹⁹ The point here is not that slowing down the political process was indisputably a bad idea, although many in London felt it was. There would have been clear problems with getting the political process going immediately; most importantly, perhaps, that the fall of the regime had left the Sunni community, which had the closest ties to the old regime, without leadership and in disarray. They were not able to organize themselves as quickly as either the Kurds or the Shia, and they arguably had most to lose. Had a government been made before they could reorganize themselves to at least some extent, it is doubtful that the outcome would have been one acceptable to them in the long term. The point made here is merely the difference between London's planning assumptions and what happened, as this PhD is an exercise in understanding how London so badly misunderstood and misprepared its own invasion.

Ibid., 52.

¹⁰²⁰ Pattison, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry", 9.

¹⁰²¹ Reynolds, *Basrah, Baghdad, and Beyond*, 143.

Iraqis'.¹⁰²² Files and information disappeared with the people.¹⁰²³ In addition, the ministries and civil services offices were looted and attacked.¹⁰²⁴

Yet while the collapse of the Iraqi civil service might now seem to have been inevitable, Coalition forces had in fact had some initial successes. ORHA's plan had a pillar for immediate operations, which was divided in (1) humanitarian issues, (2) immediate reconstruction, and (3) civil administration.¹⁰²⁵ For the latter, there were 18 ministry teams – each with a handful of people, sometimes only two or three personnel, and the heads of the units changing all the time – that would fan out in Baghdad to restart the ministries.¹⁰²⁶ They found that the third or fourth hierarchical level of the civil service was usually still there.¹⁰²⁷ Moreover, individuals were anxious both to keep their jobs and to get the Iraqi administration working again.

Two major problems arose: looting and the American decision to debaathify the civil service. The looting was worst in Baghdad but arguing that Basra was spared would be wrong: 'Mayhem occurred. A bit like a cork coming out of a champagne bottle, they all went berserk and started looting and burning, and an area that had been appallingly undercapitalized for years under the Ba'ath regime was completely trashed.'¹⁰²⁸ The damage was much worse than the London Iraq Planning/Policy Unit had expected.¹⁰²⁹ DFID asked MoD to protect medical stocks of the International Red Cross, but nonetheless, '[t]here was mass looting of shops, offices, clinics and hospitals, and people carted anything they could carry out of every government building they could enter'.¹⁰³⁰ The British House of Commons Defence Committee later judged that 'the impact of this looting on the task of post-conflict reconstruction had been enormous', not only in material damage, but in making it difficult for the local population to 'return to work or school [or] get healthcare', thus sapping their patience with the occupation.¹⁰³¹

¹⁰²² Alderson, *Bankrolling Basra*, 19-20.

¹⁰²³ *Ibid.*, 19-20.

¹⁰²⁴ Reynolds, *Basrah, Baghdad, and Beyond*, 143-144.

Rossiter, *Target Basra. The High-Octane Story of the Royal Marine Commandos in Iraq*, 263-264.

¹⁰²⁵ Cross, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 7 December 2009", 45.

¹⁰²⁶ *Ibid.*, 46.

¹⁰²⁷ *Ibid.*, 50.

¹⁰²⁸ Rossiter, *Target Basra. The High-Octane Story of the Royal Marine Commandos in Iraq*, 263-264.

¹⁰²⁹ Chilcott, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 39.

Synnott, Lamb, and Stewart, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 9 December 2009 (First Session)", 31-32.

Cross, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 7 December 2009", 47.

¹⁰³⁰ Rossiter, *Target Basra. The High-Octane Story of the Royal Marine Commandos in Iraq*, 263-264.

Short, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 February 2010", 91-92.

¹⁰³¹ Reynolds, *Basrah, Baghdad, and Beyond*, 143-144.

Neither Britain nor the United States deployed enough people to prevent looting and crime (let alone, at a later phase, targeted campaigns against the occupation). Military troop numbers were low. In Northern Ireland in the 1970s, over 20,000 people were deployed.¹⁰³² Kosovo in the 2000s saw 60,000 security forces for a province the size of a 'couple of UK counties'.¹⁰³³ By contrast, in Iraq – over thirty times the size of Northern Ireland, with a population of almost 26 million in 2003 compared to Northern Ireland's 1.5 million in 1971 – the Coalition invaded with around 150,000 troops.¹⁰³⁴ Britain had deployed 45,000 personnel. These numbers proved sufficient to topple the regime, but they were hopelessly inadequate after the war-fighting phase. Moreover, or perhaps as a result, the troops mostly stood back when looting took place.¹⁰³⁵

The aggressive posture of many (American) troops yet their refusal to intervene in looting, combined with their low overall numbers, is one way of evaluating the problem.¹⁰³⁶ Another way to evaluate the problems with looting, criminality, and internal security, is by considering the lack of *police* forces in post-war Iraq. As discussed in the last chapter, the Foreign & Commonwealth Office had taken on international policing in general and for Iraq. Someone in Washington had realised that executive police forces (police forces that do actual policing, not training) might be necessary in Iraq and asked the United Kingdom whether it could provide them.¹⁰³⁷ Britain could not: most of its police forces are unarmed and the Northern Irish and military police had other tasks too and, in any case, could not raise enough numbers. Washington subsequently dropped the issue, assuming no executive police forces would be needed after all, Britain hopefully assumed that the Iraqi forces would be maintained, that the breakdown in law and order after the invasion would be limited, and that other countries would contribute via the United Nations. Thus, no substantial police forces were planned.

¹⁰³² Cross, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry: 'Post-Invasion Iraq: The Planning and the Reality After the Invasion From Mid-2002 to the End of August 2003.'", 13.

¹⁰³³ *Ibid.*, 13.

¹⁰³⁴ *Ibid.*, 13-14.

¹⁰³⁵ Reynolds, *Basrah, Baghdad, and Beyond*, 143-144.

Michael Boyce, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 27 January 2011," 2011, 71.

Blair, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 21 January 2011", 158.

Dowse and Ehrman, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 25 November 2009", 23.

Manning, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 30 November 2009", 95.

¹⁰³⁶ Cross, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry: 'Post-Invasion Iraq: The Planning and the Reality After the Invasion From Mid-2002 to the End of August 2003.'", 22-23.

¹⁰³⁷ Pattison, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry", 13, 17.
Ibid., 13, 17.

Using the Iraqi police proved hard. 'The police that we brought back in in short order which everyone said was a wonderful effect ... brought with it people who the locals knew only too well were guilty of heinous crime.'¹⁰³⁸ Professionalism is hard to install in a short period of time, particularly in an unstable security situation where corruption is rife and tensions that were suppressed for decades have just been released. With so many internal power struggles going on – based on ethnicity, religion, local power hierarchies, the tribal system, nationalistic feelings for various groups, differences on how to achieve shared goals – establishing a neutral, non-racist, non-corrupt police force in a country that had not had one, was impossible in the short term and very difficult in the long term.

In any case, Britain did not have the police officers to train them. First, it needed to find the volunteers within its own police ranks. But the harder problem was not finding volunteers; it was sending them out. There was a 'tremendous reluctance from APCO to supply police officers'.¹⁰³⁹ British constables needed to give permission for their police officers to be deployed to Iraq; some were reluctant to give up their best men.¹⁰⁴⁰ In addition, because the police are civilians, duty of care responsibilities arose – to the frustration of the military, who needed those officers and somewhat resented the different level of risk analysis done on the police officers.¹⁰⁴¹ At the start of July 2003, a British lieutenant asked for 90 police men.¹⁰⁴² Six months later, two were in Iraq.¹⁰⁴³ Little wonder then that the British did not manage to train the Iraqi police efficiently and effectively. The assumption of the Iraqi police maintaining its policing duties and internal security thus proved wrong.

The second big hurdle to getting Iraq up and running was the extent to which the civil service was debaathified.¹⁰⁴⁴ Immediately after his arrival in Baghdad, Bremer announced that the four top levels of the Iraqi administration would be removed because of their strong ties to the old regime.¹⁰⁴⁵ This was more than Britain had envisaged, but any objections – vehemently expressed by British on the ground – were waived aside.¹⁰⁴⁶ Debaathification is a thorny issue: without a clear break with the past, the new regime would just seem a

¹⁰³⁸ Synnott, Lamb, and Stewart, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 9 December 2009 (First Session)", 42.

¹⁰³⁹ Ibid., 21, 108.

¹⁰⁴⁰ Ibid., 21, 108.

¹⁰⁴¹ Ibid., 20-21.

Burridge and Brims, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 50.

¹⁰⁴² Synnott, Lamb, and Stewart, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 9 December 2009 (First Session)", 19-20.

¹⁰⁴³ Ibid., 19-20.

¹⁰⁴⁴ Blair, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 29 January 2010", 200.

¹⁰⁴⁵ Sawers, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 10 December 2009", 65.

¹⁰⁴⁶ Tebbit and Boyce, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 3 December 2009", 110.
Meyer, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 26 November 2009", 98.

continuation of the hated old regime; many at the top of Hussein's regime were certainly responsible for terrible crimes. Yet many more others had been members of the Baath party because it was a precondition to holding a job; removing them would simply put more people out of work for no good reason, without enough qualified professionals to replace them.¹⁰⁴⁷ Bremer dismissed opposition to the extent of the civil service's debaathification by arguing it was popular with Iraqis.¹⁰⁴⁸ Many had suffered greatly at the hands of the old regime.

However, the dismissal of all those qualified people – civil servants, administrators, teachers, politicians – led to a massive knowledge gap.¹⁰⁴⁹ Those who remained at work were unfamiliar with the higher levels of the organization.¹⁰⁵⁰ Few were inclined, willing and able to show the initiative and expertise necessary to fill the gap; certainly in a law-less, post-war situation, no-one would be willing to take the blame vis-à-vis an angry mob if anything went wrong.¹⁰⁵¹ The Coalition forces did not understand the system they had now decapitated – plus, as mentioned earlier, much of the infrastructure was looted and destroyed.¹⁰⁵² Thus, essential services like electricity and water provision in many places became *worse* than they had been under Saddam Hussein.¹⁰⁵³ This was particularly true in the South.¹⁰⁵⁴ To the Iraqis, it seemed incredible that their occupiers could put a man on the moon but fail to fix the electricity supply¹⁰⁵⁵; many suspected foul play or at the very least a lack of interest in their fate on behalf of the Coalition. Their daily life became a struggle, and it was a direct result of the invasion.

4. FROM BAD PREPARATION TO INSURGENCY

British planning for the post-invasion phase, like American planning, was bad. It started from an unclear policy position – with the notable absence of a preferred alternative and articulated minimal requirements – and as a result, the plans meant to achieve the policy were based on unsuitable premises. Moreover, a complex insurgency started emerging mere months after the invasion. It was complex in that it involved many different parties, each with

¹⁰⁴⁷ Albert Whitley, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry," January 25, 2011, 4.

¹⁰⁴⁸ Chakrabarti, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 43, 64.

¹⁰⁴⁹ Ibid., 66-67.

Synnott, Lamb, and Stewart, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 9 December 2009 (First Session)", 28.

Walker, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 1 February 2010", 24.

¹⁰⁵⁰ Chakrabarti, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 66-67.

Cross, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 7 December 2009", 50.

¹⁰⁵¹ A vivid example: Alderson, *Bankrolling Basra*, 20-21.

¹⁰⁵² Greenstock, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 15 December 2009", 18.

¹⁰⁵³ Synnott, Lamb, and Stewart, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 9 December 2009 (First Session)", 64.

¹⁰⁵⁴ Ibid., 64.

¹⁰⁵⁵ Ibid., 33.

Hoon, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 19 January 2010", 97.

their own positions, all challenging the Coalition's authority but for distinct reasons, and while also fighting each other. The Sunnis rebelled *en masse*; the Shia community had internal struggles, part of which also addressed the Coalition forces.¹⁰⁵⁶ In 2006, Iraq's population groups turned on each other and the conflict took on sectarian characteristics of a civil war.¹⁰⁵⁷ In 2009, Britain left.¹⁰⁵⁸ Seven years later, the territory remains unstable and insecure.

One can very reasonably assume that these two elements – bad planning and insurgency – are related. Certainly, London's bad planning and plans meant that the British were badly prepared to improve daily life for the Shia community in the weeks and months after the conflict. Disenfranchisement was certainly part of the grievances of those Shia Arabs that caused the British most trouble. Yet it is difficult to know whether better planning would have been enough to prevent a bad security situation. The decision to abolish the Iraqi Armed Forces put many young, trained men on the street who helped or became insurgents. Yet *keeping* the Armed Forces would have brought its own problems. The exact causal link between London's bad planning and the mayhem in Iraq in the following years is complicated and cannot be properly assessed without considering the role of the Americans and many specific circumstances in Iraq in depth. Others have addressed it, both by arguing that the failures in the first weeks were the seeds of the later insurgency and by arguing that Iraq would always erupt into conflict but doing so falls outside the scope of this thesis.

Nonetheless, it is reasonable to assume that bad planning hurts rather than helps. This does not mean that badly planned ventures can never be successful, and that well-planned venture will always succeed. However, not knowing your preferred alternative and minimal requirements will tend to produce suboptimal decisions. Such decisions have a propensity to bring about negative consequences, even though how and how far this propensity manifests itself will be a matter of contingency. In the case of Iraq, this tendency towards failure

¹⁰⁵⁶ For analysis on the Iraqi side of the developing conflict, see:

Ahmed Hashim, *Insurgency and Counter-Insurgency in Iraq* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006).

¹⁰⁵⁷ "Elements of 'Civil War' in Iraq," *BBC News*, February 2, 2007, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/6324767.stm.

Tim Arango, "Car Bombings in Baghdad Follow a Familiar Pattern," *International New York Times*, September 3, 2013, http://www.nytimes.com/2013/09/04/world/middleeast/car-bomb-epidemic-is-the-new-normal-in-iraq.html?_r=0.

¹⁰⁵⁸ "UK Combat Operations End in Iraq," *BBC News*, April 30, 2009, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk/8026136.stm>.

A small number of British troops stayed until 2011:

"Last British Forces Withdraw from Iraq," *Al Jazeera*, May 23, 2011, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2011/05/20115221285472670.html>.

manifested itself very clearly. Whether more coherent, suitable plans would have been *enough* to make a successful of the Iraq campaign is not guaranteed, and in any case a question outside the scope of this dissertation. However, it is plain to see that the United Kingdom failed to give itself the best possible chance of success.

5. CONCLUSION

This chapter discussed what happened in the period immediately after the United States and the United Kingdom had declared victory in Iraq. It demonstrated that the assumptions on which British planning was based, were not true when Britain actually went to war. This can be explained – as shown in the last two chapters – by the observation that plans were made based on one assumed preferred preference, whereas in the end, another preference was chosen politically. Hence there was a mismatch between the circumstances in which Britain went to war and the plans that had assumed other conditions of invading Iraq. The plans thus were unsuitable for the invasion as it happened.

Once the war-fighting phase was over, the British troops in the South struggled, as did the British representatives to the American-led (civilian) headquarters in Baghdad. The American military leaders in Baghdad expected the British to keep their own area quiet. The British forces in the South needed money and resources, yet these were not forthcoming. The Office for Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA), was understaffed, overwhelmed and of little help. Moreover, London was non-responsive and seemed intent only on avoiding costs. The idea of a British-led ORHA presence in Basra was refused, apparently for monetary reasons. London also refused or was incapable – despite multiple requests of people on the ground – to give further policy guidance beyond ‘do not commit’ to anything.

A large part of the problem of the stalemate was that the British had not envisaged being present in Iraq under these circumstances. In its planning, the military had assumed that civilians would start contributing soon after the war-fighting was over. In reality, DFID’s civilians had only very limited means of doing so as long as the United Nations was not present on the ground. In any case, the Department for International Development was not ready for war. It had assumed war was weeks or months away, as the Security Council route had (correctly) looked like it would be successful anytime soon. Nor had DFID expected to be working with ORHA or the CPA as the leading civilian authority; DFID had legal constraint on working together with an institution intent on changing the institutions of Iraq without explicit additional Security Council resolution. Funding was also highly insufficient.

The United Nations being largely side-lined also meant that other countries were reluctant to contribute to the American-British presence in Iraq. Again, British plans assumed that other countries would quickly start shouldering large parts of the burden. Another problem was criminality. Looting and crime sprung up around Iraq as virtually all levels of government suddenly evaporated. The invaders did not have enough police forces to deal with this. They had been aware of this policing problem in advance but ended up ignoring it. The problems were exacerbated when Bremer, the head of the new Coalition Provisional Authority, made several strategic decisions without consulting the British. These included disbanding the army and thoroughly debaathifying the Iraqi civil service.

To the Iraqis, these problems of the British and the Americans seemed so incredible as to raise more suspicion and mistrust: were they incompetent or did they not care? In reality, the troops had gone to war with plans that did not match the circumstances. For the war-fighting phase that was not a problem; but it proved deeply problematic when the post-invasion phase started and the lack of suitable plans became clear. It is hard to assess how and to what extent these problems in the beginning contributed to the ensuing insurgency(s); but many writers focusing on the post-war phase, whose research starts where this dissertation ends, have indicated that this set the British up for a classic kind of failure.

Chapter VI: The Relation Between 'Why' and 'How' London Went to War

1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter analyses British 2001-2003 Iraq policy as a whole. Its argumentative burden is the thesis of the overall dissertation: that London invaded Iraq badly prepared because of its failure to have a clear policy position. This argument consists of three principal parts, which also constitute three out of four parts of this chapter. First, I establish that London indeed failed to have a clear policy position. The most important problem was the lack of an agreed-upon preferred alternative to the policy that was being pursued, although there was a second, more minor problem around the ill-defined policy goal too. This lack of clarity harmed the British government in two related yet distinct ways. The first harm – elaborated upon in the second part of this chapter – done by the lack of clarity on British policy was that the plans that were prepared were not good. The second harm of this lack of agreed-upon preferred alternative, I argue, is that it drove the government to push ahead with the invasion despite the many indications that there was a severe lack of suitable plans.

Those in the British government and civil service responsible for Iraq policy did not have a clear policy position between September 2001 and March 2003. There was no clearly defined policy goal: the government wavered between 'disarmament' and 'disarmament+' which would include a stable, democratic Iraq. Nonetheless, a fairly clear singular strategy emerged as the result of competing forces: disarmament, if necessary by force, through the Security Council. Disarmament was pushed by the Prime Minister; his government and civil service put this in the (only possible) context of the Security Council. On a preferred alternative to such disarmament via the Security Council, however, there was no agreement.

Two different implicit interpretations existed: (1) Saddam Hussein must be dealt with, if necessary without the United Nations, (2) the British cannot abandon the Security Council. In practice, of course, the latter might mean postponing, or abandoning, quick disarmament. Minimal requirements similarly were never clear: both internally and externally the government spoke of 'iron conditions' and 'preconditions' to various scenarios, but these elements of Iraq policy, which might have passed for minimal requirements, were easily and frequently abandoned. Genuine, well-thought-out minimal requirements – the kind that would have logically followed from having established a preferred alternative to the policy pursued – were not articulated, let alone consistently acted upon.

This lack of clear policy position mattered in two ways. The British failure to establish a clear policy goal and, more important still, an agreed-upon preferred alternative, led to different government entities making their own assumptions – but these assumptions were mostly wrong, as well as mutually conflicting. This harmed Britain's preparation for any plans in Iraq in a multitude of ways. Five failures are highlighted in this chapter: the Ministry of Defence's failure to demand or provide clarity about the policy goal it was preparing for; the Department for International Development's failure to make relevant plans, the result of a differently envisaged preferred alternative than the one that prevailed politically; the interdepartmental mismatch of those departments' plans; the Foreign Office's failure to prepare any well-development plans at all, which is in no small measure linked to the uncertainty that existed about the policy it was pursuing; and Cabinet's failure to identify and manage all of these problems.

The lack of clarity about the policy that was being pursued, and the limits of that policy, had a second type of effect as well. Indeed, there are *two* curious aspects about Britain's decision to go to war. The first is: how do a Prime Minister and government stake so much political capital on the decision to go to war yet end up virtually unprepared for that very invasion – an invasion of choice, no less, in which unpreparedness must be less easily forgiven. The second curiosity, related but distinct, is the following: *given* that it should have been fairly easy for Cabinet and the Prime Minister to understand the extent of the under- and mispreparedness for an invasion in March 2003, with the Americans but without genuine Security Council support, how must we explain the decision to *nonetheless* invade? Wanting to pursue disarmament and failing to prepare for the circumstances as they present themselves is one thing; going through with the decision at that point, knowing the plans are not up to standard, quite another.

I argue that here too, the dynamic of policy uncertainty crucially shaped events. In other words, the lack of preferred alternative was the root cause of both the unpreparedness for the invasion *and* the decision to nonetheless go ahead. The second element happened because the lack of preferred alternative made it both argumentatively and emotionally harder to assess the necessity of a policy reappraisal and what such a re-evaluation should amount to. As has been written before, this lack of alternative tends to make decision-makers nervous and overly pessimistic about alternatives. It is emotionally harder to abandon a plan when the stakes are high and there is no clear alternative. As a result, the policy that Britain followed in the end was the policy of invading Iraq alongside the United States without Security Council support: in practical terms the policy closest to what it had been pursuing all along, albeit in circumstances that would have previously been considered unacceptable.

Without minimal requirements and defined preferred alternative, it was hard to judge whether this was the best option on the table. It became the option chosen.

Moreover, this is not just a matter of temperament and emotional avoidance; the lack of clearly defined policy also makes it harder *argumentatively* to argue for a change of policy. Indeed, when the limits of the initial policy goal are badly defined, it is harder to argue that the initial policy goal is, in fact, no longer what is being debated (and in the past chapters we have seen several examples of shifts in policy that were portrayed and perceived as *continuity*). If the goalposts and boundaries have never been clearly defined, it is easier for them to shift and harder to argue that they have shifted. Had the policy goal and preferred alternative been clearly established well ahead of that final Cabinet meeting before the invasion, it would have doubtlessly been easier for members to see and articulate how far the policy had shifted and the extent to which Whitehall policy planning had been premised on different conditions. As it is, the lack of policy clarity not only made Britain less well prepared for an invasion in March 2003; it probably also has a role in explaining why London forged ahead with the invasion despite this.

Chapters III to V traced various aspects of Britain's Iraq policy between 2001 and 2003 in detail. Unlike the current chapter, those chapters concentrated on a description of events as they unfolded. This chapter analyses those events and how they related to each other. It highlights how the decision-making described in chapter III impacted the planning process and plans that were reconstructed in chapter IV; and how the result was the litany of problems described in chapter V. To do so, it uses the lens introduced in chapter II: that of the (missing) preferred alternative. This chapter focuses on the *absence* of the preferred alternative and how this impacted Britain's foreign policy for the worse. Let us therefore begin by establishing that London did, indeed, fail to have a clear policy position, including a well-defined preferred alternative to its policy.

2. LONDON DID NOT HAVE A CLEAR POLICY POSITION

Policy goal and strategy

The government was more or less clear on its policy goal: weapons of mass destruction disarmament (oh, and add democracy)

Until the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 on American soil, the United Kingdom had been pursuing a policy of containment vis-à-vis Iraq, even as that policy had increasingly

come under pressure.¹⁰⁵⁹ After 9/11, large parts of that containment policy initially continued as it had been going on: the Security Council Resolution on smarter sanctions against Iraq was passed on May 2002.¹⁰⁶⁰ Nonetheless, it quickly became clear that Washington was dropping its policy of containment. This put London in a dilemma. On one hand, in December 2001, an internal British policy document asked, 'If the US heads for direct action, have we ideas which could divert them to an alternative course?', focusing on alternatives to the American direction.¹⁰⁶¹ On the other hand, a letter of the 3rd of the same month to David Manning from the Foreign Office discussed options for 'dealing' with Iraq, exploring the American-led road.¹⁰⁶²

Indeed, London soon started to adopt certain elements of American thinking on Iraq, most notably the idea that containment as usual, or even smarter sanctions, would no longer do. Of course, in the eyes of many containment had become ineffective anyway: there was fertile ground for moving away from this policy (albeit less so for moving away from smarter sanctions). This, however, is also where things become less clear; for while the old policy goal was abandoned, a new one was far from clearly defined. It was sparked by the United States' enthusiasm for regime change (a problematic concept for Great Britain, not least for legal reasons), pushed strongly by Blair's feeling that risk could no longer be tolerated, and eventually coalesced into disarmament. This constituted an important change in Iraq policy. It is remarkable, therefore, that it was mostly portrayed as a form of *continuity*. The secret Options Paper, for example, stressed that '[s]ince 1991, our objective had been to re-integrate a law-abiding Iraq'.¹⁰⁶³

Maybe so. But this theoretical long-term desire suddenly morphed into a short-term ambition. A policy goal of containment is different from a policy goal of disarmament; and while it might be that the long-term 'plan' (desire might be a better term) for Iraq remained the same, this nonetheless constitutes a substantial shift. On 15 February 2001, an FCO paper still stated that '[w]e cannot achieve complete WMD disarmament'.¹⁰⁶⁴ By December 2001, the discussion had moved to considerations about how regime change could be combined

¹⁰⁵⁹ Webb et al., "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 24 November 2009", 13-14.

Gouly, "Letter to Tom McKane: 'Iraq.'"

McKane, "February Letter to John Sawers: 'Iraq.'"

Sawers, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 10 December 2009", 9.

Plett, "Iraq: Second UN Official Resigns."

¹⁰⁶⁰ Ewen MacAskill, "UN Agrees Long-Awaited Smart Sanctions for Iraq," *The Guardian*, May 15, 2002, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2002/may/15/iraq.unitednations>.

¹⁰⁶¹ "Letter from Richard Dearlove's Private Secretary to Sir David Manning: Iraq."

¹⁰⁶² McDonald, "Letter: 'Iraq: Options.'"

¹⁰⁶³ "Iraq: Options Paper."

¹⁰⁶⁴ McKane, "February Letter to John Sawers: 'Iraq.'"

with other regional interests, implying disarmament and accompanying regime change were not only possible, but envisaged.¹⁰⁶⁵ Any discussion about regime change, however, had to deal with the problem that regime change could not in itself be the British policy, for well-established legal reasons. As a result, disarmament was the only way in which to talk about the new Iraq policy – regardless of whether regime change was the actual goal, a positive side-effect, a negative side-effect, or an irrelevance. Which of those it was, would have depended on your interlocutor.

This shift in policy goal was portrayed (and perhaps perceived) as a shift in means; and indeed, the bulk of the conversation seamlessly shifted to a discussion focused on means, again fuelled importantly by American thinking. Is an invasion possible? Desirable? Can an uprising be provoked? Can Saddam Hussein be forced to disarm via extra Security Council pressure? This focus on the means and the failure to acknowledge that disarmament is more than a continuation of Iraq policy as it has been understood since 1991 is problematic. Policy-makers miss a chance to properly define the new policy goal and the scope of that goal. The issue of democratisation of Iraq looms large here. When asked, the British government will narrowly define its policy goal as disarmament. (Despite the fact that of course, a democratic Iraq has *also* been Britain's long-term hope since well before 9/11.) Indeed, the Foreign Office and the military were keen to emphasize that disarmament was the only goal.¹⁰⁶⁶ Yet at the same time, democracy pops up regularly but casually as an additional goal.

In any case, disarmament is overwhelmingly likely to occur together with the disposal of Saddam Hussein, and then someone else will have to take over.¹⁰⁶⁷ The idea is also partly normative: democracy is the obvious good thing to happen to Iraq, and if Britain 'can establish and spread the values of liberty, the rule of law, human rights and an open society then that is in our national interest too'.¹⁰⁶⁸ Therefore, if Britain has to find a replacement for Saddam Hussein anyway, it might as well install a democracy. This will also contribute to a law-abiding Iraq at peace with its neighbours, which is another part of Britain's overall vision for a future Iraq.¹⁰⁶⁹ In addition to disarmament, democracy thus becomes, to some undefined extent, a part of the end goal without much thought, discussion, or attention.

¹⁰⁶⁵ "Letter from Richard Dearlove's Private Secretary to Sir David Manning: Iraq."

¹⁰⁶⁶ Straw, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 21 January 2010", 37-39.

¹⁰⁶⁷ "Letter to Simon Webb."

Simon Webb, "Letter to Peter Ricketts," *Ministry of Defence*, May 10, 2002.

¹⁰⁶⁸ Blair, "Doctrine of the International Community."

¹⁰⁶⁹ Straw, "Letter to the Prime Minister: 'Iraq: Contingency Planning.'"

There were other incentives for including democracy in the goals Britain had for Iraq. London felt it had an interest in keeping strong the relationship with the United States, who clearly favoured regime change. Saddam Hussein's was an atrocious regime; later Iraqi president Talabani described it as 'a prison camp above ground and a mass grave beneath it,' a description correct at least in sentiment.¹⁰⁷⁰ Another argument was the idea that terrorism was a risk that could no longer be tolerated in a post-9/11 world. Although the risk of terrorism from Iraq to Britain was considered low even at the time, Iraq having weapons of mass destruction might mean terrorists might be able to acquire those. If regime change in Iraq would lead to more stability in the Middle East, that would be another bonus.

What interests us here, however, is not whether democracy in Iraq would have benefits.¹⁰⁷¹ The question here is whether a democratic Iraq was part of Britain's policy goal. Of course, if one fails to distinguish between short-term goals and long-term preferences, the answer is straightforward: yes, it is a part of the goal. If one *does* distinguish, however, the case is less clear. On the one hand, there were the concerted efforts to demonstrate that the British policy goal in Iraq was disarmament, and disarmament only. Democracy in Iraq, under this logic, would at most be a positive side effect from the fall of Saddam Hussein, in itself a likely side effect of disarmament. On the other hand, this idea that democracy could follow from disarmament meant that democracy – a clear preference indeed – was also intended for the reasonably near future. Missing from this picture was the acknowledgement that disarmament would not *automatically* lead to democracy (even as it seemed to open up the possibility) and a genuine discussion as to whether that route must be actively pursued. The implicit answer was 'yes'; the more explicit answer was 'no'; a half-hearted attempt at preparation was made.

The government was clear on its strategy: disarmament via the Security Council

Even though the government had policy goals for Iraq of varying levels of ambition (from disarmament to a stable, democratic Iraq), it emerged with a clear strategy: pursuing disarmament, if necessary via force, through the Security Council. At least, this would lead to disarmament. But more broadly speaking, disarmament was seen as a necessary (though, one could argue, not exactly sufficient) step to the wider, more ambitious policy goals. This disarmament through the Security Council would probably have to involve force; but in the

¹⁰⁷⁰ "Blair Makes Troops Pledge to Iraq," *BBC News*, 2005, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/4314308.stm.

¹⁰⁷¹ In any case, the merits of democracy in Iraq as a British policy hinge not only on its benefits, but also on its costs, its feasibility, and how this scenario compares to the alternatives.

unlikely event that Security Council pressure would lead to a sudden capitulation by Baghdad, that would have been all the better.

That last point is important, because it is in direct contradiction to any suggestions that Blair, or his government, preferred war to any other option. There is no reason to believe this is the case; Tony Blair wanted to 'deal' with Saddam Hussein, and the government as a whole would have gladly taken peaceful disarmament over an invasion. Had London preferred war to peaceful disarmament, it would have advocated for a *high* bar for Saddam Hussein in Security Council Resolution 1441. Instead, unlike the United States, it argued for a *low* bar.¹⁰⁷² In other words, the British negotiators *wanted* Saddam Hussein to be able to comply with the disarmament conditions. They also were lobbying hard for more time with their American counterparts to give the peaceful route more time.¹⁰⁷³ They failed; but they tried. Although the British were never hopeful that peaceful disarmament through the Security Council would work, that was certainly understood as the best possible outcome for London.

Given Saddam Hussein's track record of non-cooperation, however, the possibility of an invasion (the more likely outcome of the Security Council route) had come on the table soon after 9/11, when the policy goal shifted from containment to disarmament. The means that were now under consideration were 'covert support to opposition groups to mount an uprising/coup'; 'air support for opposition groups to mount an uprising/coup'; 'a full-scale ground campaign'; or a combination of these.¹⁰⁷⁴ Supporting opposition groups quickly disappeared from the radar as it was unclear whether a coup could be provoked and if it would work; as time went on, it also became more and more clear that Washington intended to go to war.

The focus thus shifted to an invasion. The questions were two-fold: ally with the United States and if yes, with what contribution?¹⁰⁷⁵ Issues of feasibility and legality severely limited the options. The Prime Minister's stance was clear: if disarmament through Security Council pressure failed (as there was every reason to believe it would), London would stand by the United States, up to participation in an invasion. The Foreign Office and the Attorney General's assessment of international law forced London to get Security Council support if the United Kingdom wanted to militarily attack Baghdad. The strategy of disarmament via

¹⁰⁷² Greenstock, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 27 November 2009", 30-32.

Straw, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry", 17.

Straw, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 21 January 2010", 97.

¹⁰⁷³ Greenstock, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry: 'Developments at the UN.'", 15.

¹⁰⁷⁴ "Iraq: Options Paper."

¹⁰⁷⁵ Tebbit and Boyce, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 3 December 2009", 17-18.

the Security Council, backed by the threat of military force, reflected an emerging compromise between the Foreign Office's understanding of the necessity of the Security Council and Blair's desire to stand by the United States for a variety of reasons.

Preferred alternative and minimal requirements

The government did *not* have one preferred alternative. Instead it had two implicit, mutually exclusive alternatives.

From April 2002 on, the British government had been running Iraq policy across two tracks, as shown in Chapter III. On the one hand, the Prime Minister had given a commitment to the United States to stand by it as it would deal decisively with Baghdad. On the other hand, the Foreign Office was very clear that it would be pursuing a solution via the Security Council, and that an invasion could only be considered after and if a peaceful resolution via that body would not work. While these tracks allowed for the same strategy (for a while), they had a different internal logic with a different underlying finality.

Tony Blair wanted to disarm Saddam Hussein; show support for the United States in the face of the new-found form of terrorism demonstrated on 11 September 2001; and maintain the unity of the international community. The ideal path to obtain all those would be disarmament through a united Security Council. However, if this were to prove impossible, the preferred alternative – for Tony Blair – was to still support the United States in its quest for disarmament and a comprehensive solution for the Baghdad regime, up to military action if needed. After all, Kosovo had shown that military action could be quick and successful. In other words, Tony Blair's preferred alternative to disarmament via the Security Council would be disarmament without the Security Council.

The civil service presumed a different path. The policy goal they had been given, and which they subscribed to, was clear: disarmament through the Security Council as a short-term goal, instead of containment with the hope of indirectly disarming Baghdad in the long term. This focus on the Security Council was in keeping with the usual British approach to foreign policy and in keeping with standard British interpretations of international law. For the civil service, the 'Security Council route' was not merely the best way to achieve disarmament; assuming force or at least the credible threat of force would be needed to disarm Baghdad, it was the *only* option. The use of force against another sovereign state, after all, is only legal under very specific circumstances; in the case of Iraq under the circumstances of the early noughties, it would only be legal with Security Council authorization. Given that disarmament could only happen with the Security Council, the preferred alternative to successful

disarmament via Security Council agreement (with or without the actual use of force), was to continue smart sanctions or, potentially, any other agreement such as could be made via the Security Council.

In other words, for Tony Blair the so-called 'Security Council route' is a way, but only one way, to achieve the goal of disarmament. His implicit preferred alternative to disarmament with the backing of the Security Council (whether through force or through the threat of force) was disarmament without the support of the Security Council and the countries in it. For the civil service, on the other hand, the term 'Security Council route' refers to the idea that the issue of Iraq will be dealt with via the Security Council as a matter of principle, not convenience. The implicit preferred alternative to disarmament with the backing of the Security Council is whatever else the Security Council settles on (most likely smart sanctions, passed in May 2002).

This is not to say that Tony Blair failed to value the Security Council and the role this institution could play. Tony Blair personally, as well as his colleagues and civil servants, put substantial time and effort into convincing the American president of the value of going to the Security Council. So did parts of the American administration. In September 2002, they succeeded. Later, too, Tony Blair continued to value unity in the international community. Much time was spent trying to bridge the gap between the United States and countries sceptical of the belligerent talk coming from its capital. And in the beginning of 2003, the British were lobbying hard with the Americans to give the Security Council route more time to work.

Yet it became clear that a break between the United States and much of the rest of the Security Council, most notably the permanent members, was inevitable: the United States were no longer willing to wait and the Security Council was not (yet) willing to legitimize an invasion. For Tony Blair, it was clear that the United Kingdom would stand by the United States as he had promised as early as April 2002. This was – in his view – the right course of action. The failure of the Security Council to support the United States was regrettable but did not put in doubt the moral argument for participating in the invasion: “[w]hen the international community agrees certain objectives and then fails to implement them, those who can act, must”.¹⁰⁷⁶

As Whitehall was preparing for possible outcomes of the Iraq policy however, it built its plans around the assumption that London would *not* go to war without the Security Council.

¹⁰⁷⁶ McHugh, “Bush, Blair, and the War in Iraq: Alliance Politics and the Limits of Influence”, 417.

Instead, the preferred alternative to the negotiated outcome in the Security Council would be to stay with the Security Council and accept (for now at least) the non-invasion of Iraq. The plans reflected this assumption about the preferred alternative. Note that the presumption here was that the Security Council members would *genuinely* achieve a consensus. The plans were based on other countries taking on parts of the burden from the invasion and on the United Nations system contributing, financially and logistically, to the post-invasion phase in Iraq. In other words, when the British Attorney General stated the war could be legal (pending the political judgement of the Prime Minister), based on his interpretation of the Security Council having given the green light, this was politically necessary for Cabinet to go ahead with the invasion, but it was *not* the policy as originally envisaged (disarmament with the Security Council properly), nor the preferred alternative foreseen by most civil servants (which included not breaking away from the Security Council).

The government failed to articulate clear minimal requirements; the 'conditions' it articulated often proved to not be genuine conditions; different actors had different implicit minimal requirements.

British policy-makers failed to establish clear, suitable minimal requirements. This is unsurprising since they did not have one clear preferred alternative. However, the problem is not merely that they failed to derive their requirements from their preferred alternative: the 'conditions' they did set, had other problems too. While British policy-makers and civil servants did, at various moments, talk about 'conditions' and 'preconditions' to participation in Iraq, these were badly communicated internally. They were also not followed up. There was no clear distinction drawn between non-negotiable conditions and gains that were interesting, but that would not be of essence for the eventual policy preference of the United Kingdom. Little surprise then, that many of those 'conditions' were not taken seriously externally, and indeed altogether proved to *not* be (pre)conditions at all. Other conditions were very much meant as *sine qua non* conditions but abandoned nonetheless; garnering public support for the invasion comes to mind as an example, as does the condition of a proper plan for the post-war phase.

One argument in this dissertation, as established, is that policy-makers *should* have a clear idea of minimal requirements for the pursuance of its chosen policy. It should be very clear to the negotiators involved (on your own side of the table) which deal is good enough, and which policy must be abandoned because the price is too high. Similarly, an otherwise good policy must not be scuppered [refused?] because it is not the best outcome one could have hoped for, particularly when it is the best option still available. What those minimal

requirements should have looked like depends on the 'preferred alternative to the pursued policy' chosen by policy-makers. The argument here relates not to *what* minimal requirements should have been chosen; the argument is that (a) minimal requirements should have been chosen (b) depending on the preferred alternative chosen by the policy-makers (c) and should not have been confused with elements that are desirable but not in fact essential. Let us first discuss the 'conditions' set in Iraq policy over the course of 2002, which often turned out not to be conditions at all. With that out of the way, let us then consider the absence of genuine minimal requirements.

The so-called 'conditions' in Britain's 2001-2003 Iraq policy

When British Iraq policy was under review and disarmament on the table as one possibility, British civil servants and politicians alike presumed that there would be conditions to any such action. Any participation in an American invasion (sanctioned by the United Nations Security Council) was particularly subject to a list of 'conditions' or 'preconditions'. Indeed, by the time that the Crawford meeting of April 2002 had taken place at the latest, certain conditions became a written part of the Foreign Office's Iraq policy.¹⁰⁷⁷ They included pursuing the United Nations route until it was 'exhausted' – a term, as shown in earlier chapters, that begs a more precise definition of 'exhaustion'. There also needed to be progress in the Middle East Peace Process; there must be a solid 'winning concept'; and the public – both domestically and Middle-Eastern – must be informed and the idea of war must be sold to make any use of force politically viable.

These ideas were certainly meant to be a part of Britain's Iraq policy.¹⁰⁷⁸ They were a part of the Foreign Office's policy and they were part of David Manning's thinking about Iraq. However, the American lack of concern for these 'iron' conditions, the failure to obtain them and the decision to nonetheless push ahead with an invasion all beg the question: were these meant as genuine conditions for participation in an American-led invasion? In this context, does 'condition' mean a minimal requirement: a sine qua non without which the policy goal that is conditional on it will be abandoned? Or does 'condition' mean something rather looser, like a circumstance that would be generally desirable but not necessarily a prerequisite to the use of force? If they were meant to be minimal requirements, were they

¹⁰⁷⁷ Boyce, "Letter to General Richard B. Myers, United States Air Force."
 Straw, "Letter to the Prime Minister: 'Iraq: Contingency Planning.'"
 Chaplin, "Note: 'Iraq: Military Action.'"

¹⁰⁷⁸ Boyce, "Letter to General Richard B. Myers, United States Air Force."

abandoned after a serious reconsideration of the policy, or were they gradually abandoned without an explicit rationale behind this change of plan?

This is where policy-makers disagree profoundly. Various Cabinet ministers and political advisors had various interpretations on how binding London's conditions were: whether they were, indeed, minimal requirements. The spectrum of divergence ranges from Tony Blair on one side to the Foreign Office's official position on the other hand (shared by most and perhaps all of Whitehall). Both Tony Blair and Jack Straw would argue that there were no 'conditions' as such, albeit for diametrically opposed reasons. To Blair, there were no conditions – only recommendations – because doing the 'right thing' is a good in itself and therefore coalition partners should be wholeheartedly supported.¹⁰⁷⁹ His 2002 Foreign Secretary, by contrast, argued to the Iraq Inquiry panel that the 'conditions' that people talked about could not be 'conditions' for Britain to support the United States: instead, they were, in Straw's reading, the entire rationale and strategy of London's policy. The United Nations route; for example, was not a 'condition' to be fulfilled before Britain could participate in military action: the United Nations route, for the FCO, *was* the policy.¹⁰⁸⁰

Foreign policy advisor David Manning was unequivocal that these were meant to be genuine minimal requirements for Britain's participation in any invasion; that it would not have been possible to loosen these conditions. In his view, Britain would have had to reconsider its policy if any of these conditions would not be respected. To a large extent, and despite Tony Blair's testimony to the Iraq Inquiry and his actions at the time, it was also the message the Prime Minister sent to the world: the government recognises the gravity of a possible invasion; this invasion will only be undertaken with a certain number of 'guarantees'. This line of persuasion can be detected both in the communication within the civil service and in the communication to the wider British public. However, British ambassador to Washington Meyer was only informally aware of those conditions – they apparently were not sent out in writing to the embassy – and he was unsure about the strength of those conditions.¹⁰⁸¹ The Americans tended to not take them seriously.¹⁰⁸²

Many of these 'conditions' certainly did not function as minimal requirements for British use of force. Making the case for war to the British public certainly was a major concern of the government, but it seems never to have been a condition proper for action. That is

¹⁰⁷⁹ Blair, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 29 January 2010", 44-51.

¹⁰⁸⁰ Straw, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 21 January 2010", 37-39.

¹⁰⁸¹ Meyer, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 26 November 2009", 63-64.

¹⁰⁸² Tebbit and Boyce, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 3 December 2009", 61.

unsurprising, as the person who had most to gain or lose from public acceptance for the war, Tony Blair, was also the person most fervently convinced of the need to invade. The Middle East Peace Process seems to have been quickly forgotten about by everyone, at least in relation to Iraq policy. The idea of a winning concept was obviously not explicitly abandoned; it also does not seem to have happened, though.

Meanwhile, the most important requirement of them all, the 'Security Council route,' really refers to two quite different things: getting Security Council approval of military action undertaken by the United States and the United Kingdom on one hand and getting the active cooperation of UN member states on the other hand. This distinction is a distinction made here, with the benefit of hindsight, because it allows us to highlight the extent to which policy was undefined. At the time, 'the Security Council route' was used for both elements interchangeably and simply meant, first, to get the United States to agree to put the matter of an invasion of Iraq to the Security Council and, at a later stage, to get the Security Council to agree to military force if Saddam Hussein would not disarm without force.

In the latter Britain mostly failed: the Security Council did not have much appetite for disarmament in the spring of 2003 (although many countries, including France, were willing to leave open this option for a later date). However, the Council did pass a resolution that Britain interpreted as a legal base for war. This resolution and its interpretation by Attorney General Lord Goldsmith allowed the British government to argue that the Security Council route had, indeed, been followed to the end. Another line of argumentation visible in British thinking was that Britain had *attempted* to make the Security Council agree with its Iraq policy, and that this attempt itself must count as 'following the Security Council route.' The underlying rationale here is that a fair effort, rather than results, can suffice.

These different interpretations of 'the Security Council route' show the shifting meaning of that idea. This idea, which initially was one of the firm conditions of a potential invasion, remained a condition throughout 2002, at least on the surface. In reality, however, the meaning of this idea changed, allowing the 'condition' to be fulfilled nominally although not in substance. The interpretation that was given to 'the Security Council route' in February 2003 differed in important ways from the interpretation of a year earlier; the condition as it had originally been set out, was *not* fulfilled when British troops crossed the Iraqi border in March.

Britain's lack of minimal requirements

At a glance, one could easily mistake these ‘conditions’ or ‘pre-conditions’ of British Iraq policy for the minimal requirements argued for in chapter II. Yet they fell short in several ways. They were not consistent; they were not clearly defined. Partly, the problem was that whatever conditions existed were not shared across government and the civil service; their status as condition (prerequisite or ideal circumstance?) was unclear; their meaning was shifting; they were not used effectively in communication or negotiation, most notably with the Americans (who failed to attach much importance to them, apparently rightfully so); they were abandoned without much explicit thought or acknowledgement of the fact.

However, these ‘conditions’ also fall short of minimal requirements as understood in chapter II in a more fundamental way: they did *not* shed any clarity on Britain’s preferred alternative. Of course, this is unsurprising since Britain, as established earlier, did not even have one clearly-defined preferred alternative while pursuing its Iraq policy. However, the problem with the minimal requirements is deeper than that: they also do not correspond very well to *either* of the implicit preferred alternatives that were being pursued. These minimal requirements were not derived from the preferred alternative, to which they bore little logical relation (for *either* alternative). This meant that British civil servants and diplomats spent time and capital on the negotiation of conditions that proved ultimately irrelevant, while neglecting those conditions that should have been relevant.

3. LONDON GOES TO WAR...

Official British policy through the spring and summer of 2002 was that Britain would join a coalition of military force against Iraq only if certain conditions were fulfilled.¹⁰⁸³ These included new chances for Saddam Hussein to prove his cooperation, Security Council support, a military ‘winning concept’, and the case for war being made to the British public. In the words of David Manning, ‘it would not have been possible to have softened those conditions.’¹⁰⁸⁴ Or, as Foreign Secretary Jack Straw put it: disarmament and the Security Council *were* Britain’s policy, and any talk of invasion would only ever be relevant in this context.¹⁰⁸⁵

¹⁰⁸³ Meyer, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 26 November 2009”, 63-64.
Chaplin, “Note: ‘Iraq: Military Action.’”

Straw, “Letter to the Prime Minister: ‘Iraq: Contingency Planning.’”

¹⁰⁸⁴ Manning, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 30 November 2009”, 56.

¹⁰⁸⁵ Straw, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 21 January 2010”, 37-39.

By the next spring, reality looked rather different. The public, far from convinced, protested *en masse* in the capital on 15 February 2003.¹⁰⁸⁶ Between 750,000 and 1,000,000 people voiced their anger at the war plans. Civil servants across Whitehall knew the plans to be undercooked. There was no winning concept – at least, no winning concept that addressed the goals London had by now set itself, which included a stable Iraq as well as ‘weapons of mass destruction’ disarmament. They also strongly, and correctly, suspected that the United States were not ready for what would happen after the fall of Baghdad. The Security Council and international community were deeply fractured. Yet Britain went to war.

For someone who focuses on Tony Blair as the driver behind British policy, this would not seem surprising. In such a reading, Britain did not abandon the United States because Britain had never planned or meant to enforce any conditions to participation in the war. Blair either really wanted the invasion (for example to ensure regime change) or – the more charitable interpretation – he was genuinely willing to go to war if that was unfortunately the only way of addressing the risk coming out of Baghdad. Conditions were never really conditions: they were some kind of recommendation at best, or a smoke screen to misguide others at worst.

The problem with that interpretation is that one Prime Minister does not equal a policy. Virtually the entire rest of the British government and civil service, both in public and in private government documents, assumed there were conditions. Cabinet members assumed there were. The policy *actually pursued* in the Security Council suggests there were genuine conditions. Legally, it went without saying that there were: some of these ‘conditions’ were necessary for the war to be legal at all. The Foreign Office thought that Iraq policy was to pursue the United Nations route. Of course, this was also the version put out in public, even though Blair equally often gave the opposite impression. In other words, the eventual British policy was, until very late in the process, mostly just a hope that Blair entertained. We still must understand how and why the rest of the government gave in on its previously iron conditions and eventually coalesced around Blair’s version of a preferred alternative.

London most certainly tried to influence Washington, desperately so towards the end.¹⁰⁸⁷ First, the British had to convince the Americans to go via the Security Council at all (this they eventually succeeded in, although this was as much the result of internal American politics as

¹⁰⁸⁶ “Anti-War Rally Makes Its Mark.”

¹⁰⁸⁷ Chaplin and Ricketts, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 1 December 2009”, 71.

Tebbit and Boyce, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 3 December 2009”, 38, 112.

Manning, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 30 November 2009”, 71-72.

Cross, “Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry: ‘Post-Invasion Iraq: The Planning and the Reality After the Invasion From Mid-2002 to the End of August 2003.’”, 25.

of the British). The British 'at all levels up to and including the Prime Minister talking to President Bush' tried to convince the United States to give the United Nations a substantial role in the post-war effort, with less success.¹⁰⁸⁸ They also tried to push for more progress in the Arab-Israeli peace process, but their interlocutors across the Atlantic never really took this to heart. The British also argued for postponing the invasion. This might have worked, in that at some point the Americans considered going in in the end of 2002, but again whether this was because of British pressure is rather unclear. Certain is that in spring 2003, London wanted to further postpone the invasion to give the Security Council route more time but failed to get American agreement on this.

Indeed, on the whole London had little impact on the American plans. Part of the problem was that policy-makers were influencing the wrong people. They were best heard at the State Department, although of course the State Department's views being quite close to the British view does not necessarily mean that London influenced the department. Rather, the British and the State Department quite naturally found each other in already held convictions.¹⁰⁸⁹ The British fed arguments to the department in the hope of influencing the American administration; but at the same time, the State Department pleaded with the British to take up the common cause and try and convince their own political leaders in Washington. This is not so much a case of British influence as of the British joining forces with one faction of the intra-American struggle over Iraq policy.

As Iraq policy advanced, the power balance in the American administration had shifted away from the State Department to the Pentagon.¹⁰⁹⁰ While the State Department would be on board with the British ideas, it was necessary to argue hard with the Vice-President and with Secretary of Defence Rumsfeld (and, to somewhat lesser extent, National Security Advisor Rice).¹⁰⁹¹ Yet there would be very few British ministers who could go over to the United States and merit access at that level. Foreign Secretary Straw was an exception.¹⁰⁹² An additional problem was that the American chain of command and division of responsibilities between departments did not mirror the British one.

In any case, the British had no clear position of their own to stick to: they had a goal, but it was not clear to anyone how hard they could or should push. Should they only ask? Should they threaten to limit their military contribution? Should they limit their military

¹⁰⁸⁸ Chaplin and Ricketts, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 1 December 2009", 71.

¹⁰⁸⁹ Tebbit and Boyce, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 3 December 2009", 57.

¹⁰⁹⁰ Chaplin and Ricketts, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 1 December 2009", 70.

¹⁰⁹¹ Meyer, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 26 November 2009", 26.

¹⁰⁹² *Ibid.*, 25.

contribution or withdraw altogether? Perhaps this lack of reference point is why so many in the British civil service and government ended up measuring influence on the Americans *not* in terms of how close it brought them to the British position, but rather in terms of how much the Americans had moved away from *their* original plans. Getting the Americans to budge meant success, even if the result was nowhere near what London needed to stick to its conditions.¹⁰⁹³

Of course, it is sensible to understand the position and manoeuvring space of your interlocutor in negotiations. Understanding their interests and constraints makes it easier to work out a solution that addresses the principal concerns of all parties involved. But to negotiate well means to defend one's own interests while considering where the other can be accommodated to come to the outcome that is acceptable and best for both. To consider primarily the policy stance of the other and try to understand where you can accommodate them, is to set the stage for a solution that will not benefit you as much as it could. The British government should defend British interests. That does not mean, of course, that the government cannot decide at times that it is in its own interest that the United States do not hurt itself. However, it should know when and where to stop. For that, it needed a preferred alternative and corresponding minimal requirements.

This thesis does not go as far as to claim that with a better idea of British minimal requirements, London certainly would have been able to negotiate Washington out of an invasion of Iraq. Nonetheless, it seems plausible that London would at least have given itself a *better chance* at doing so with a firmer stance throughout. Washington, after all, was genuinely concerned with getting allies: hence why the United States agreed to go back to the Security Council in September 2002. The most relevant question for this thesis, however, is not whether Britain could have stopped the United States. This in any case would be a question best answered by studying *American* Iraq policy in more depth. More to the point for those interested in understanding the British story is this: why, after all this, did London not drop out of the invasion?

London could have dropped out and on several occasions was very close to wanting or having to do so. The British would not have been able to go to war (or London would have needed to denounce its support for international law) had the Attorney General not had his sudden change of mind. The parliamentary vote could not be taken for granted. Political pressure on the Prime Minister was intense. London *could* also have dropped out. This is not

¹⁰⁹³ Chilcott, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 12-14.

just true in the abstract – in the sense that no-one can force a state to go to war against its will – but also in the actual political realm. London had always been careful (although rather unsuccessful) in stressing that its commitment was conditional.¹⁰⁹⁴ The American president was aware of the pressures on Tony Blair and repeatedly offered the British government a way out. In March 2002 Donald Rumsfeld, fed up with the difficulties on the British side, had an ‘outburst saying, “If you don’t want to come, we will do it on our own”’.¹⁰⁹⁵ The president repeatedly offered the same (in a more positive spirit).¹⁰⁹⁶ A last-minute British withdrawal would have been difficult for the Americans, but they would have doubtlessly succeeded in an invasion on their own.

What Rumsfeld’s outburst demonstrated most clearly, however, was American disbelief, for a very long time, at the idea that the British might not participate in the invasion. This was despite the British stressing the conditionality of their participation throughout. As then Chief of Defence staff Lord Boyce told the Iraq Inquiry:

I want to re-emphasise the efforts we made to try and tell the Americans that we were not committed until the UN process had been completed, and then, later on in March, until the Parliamentary process had gone, and we must remember that, in context in which we were operating, we had behind us, if you like, an alliance in Afghanistan, and the fact that we were working with American forces in Kosovo and as far back as the first war in Iraq in the early 1990s (...) They just did not believe it, because they did not want to and it wasn't really until about March that Rumsfeld finally got it, and Myers got it, and [Rumsfeld] had that outburst saying, ‘If you don't want to come, we will do it on our own’, if you recall, and indeed, having got it, that's when they realised the truth.¹⁰⁹⁷

The Americans who were convinced that the British would come through turned out to be right (although perhaps accidentally so).

What did the situation look like for the British towards the beginning of 2003? In one sense, the situation looked very simple. They had promised conditional support to an American-led invasion; those conditions had not materialised; they could choose to not invade. Their preferred policy – an invasion with the backing of the Security Council – was clearly no longer on the table. The Americans had made the decision to cross the Iraqi border in March 2003. Pleas to postpone that date were ignored. The conditions that the British had set had

¹⁰⁹⁴ R.N., “Note: ‘CDS Discussion with CJCS General Myers - 3 Jul 02.’”

Boyce, “Letter to General Richard B. Myers, United States Air Force.”

¹⁰⁹⁵ Tebbit and Boyce, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 3 December 2009”, 61.

¹⁰⁹⁶ Gaby Hinsliff, “Bush Admits He Offered Blair Way Out of the Iraq Conflict,” *The Guardian*, April 23, 2006, <http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2006/apr/23/uk.iraq>.

¹⁰⁹⁷ Tebbit and Boyce, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 3 December 2009”, 61.

been ignored. On the other hand, the *reasons* for which the United Kingdom considered attacking Baghdad had not disappeared. Saddam Hussein still perhaps had weapons of mass destruction, or, more to the point: Baghdad still posed a risk.

It was not obvious how the United Kingdom should weigh up these considerations. Was the danger of the Middle-Eastern country so great that Great Britain should stand by the United States regardless? Did the failure to obtain conditions mean that the Armed Forces should not stand with their American counterparts? A better-defined policy position would have addressed exactly these questions: what is Britain's preferred alternative if the ideal negotiated solution cannot be obtained? By now the war had been prepared, in military as well as in political terms (although clearly not well enough). The default option thus had become an invasion. Standing with the Americans became an obvious choice. The alternative of withdrawal existed theoretically as well as in reality, but by this stage it would have been unclear to anyone in the British government what that policy option would amount to.

This is what Ury & Fisher have to say about such circumstances:

If you have not thought carefully about what you will do if you fail to reach an agreement, you are negotiating with your eyes closed. In most circumstances ... (the) danger [of this lack of BATNA] is that you are too committed to reaching agreement. Not having developed any alternative to a negotiated solution, you are unduly pessimistic about what would happen if negotiations broke off.¹⁰⁹⁸

In this context, thinking beyond the original solution – now unachievable – is difficult: if Security Council support cannot be found, it is hard to see what the next step should be. After all, London had negotiated itself into a corner, with its commitment to the United States on one hand and its commitment to the United Nations, and *ditto* understandings within the civil service, on the other. However, one option that was on the table was *presented* as if it were still the original policy: Blair's preferred alternative. It was phrased as if the Security Council route had been 'exhausted' and 'legality' meant the Security Council 'supported' the invasion. In other words, one of the options *seemed* much more like the initial policy and therefore seemed closer to success. Through the preferred alternative lens, what happened is therefore quite logical: the option least developed became the road not taken. Britain did not call off Operation TELIC. The country had effectively negotiated itself into a corner.

By now, only one thing was less clear to the government than what would happen if it did invade: what would happen if it did not. The government was looking for success. It was also

¹⁰⁹⁸ Fisher, Ury, and Patton, *Getting To Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In*, 102-103.

hard, at that point, to determine which course of action was better, particularly as the plans made by Whitehall were *not suited for this new policy*. Without a clear preferred alternative, without a way to weigh up the problem faced by the United Kingdom with the costs that an invasion would bring, and having geared up for an invasion, London ended up going to war. This was, in the end, not so much a conscious policy choice by Cabinet, of which the pros and cons had been debated and weighed up, as a lack of discussion: “no one wanted to rock the boat,” as described in Chapter III.¹⁰⁹⁹

I argue that the lack of explicit preferred alternative and minimal requirements is a root cause of this lack of discussion. Abandoning the plan to join the American invasion of Iraq became unthinkable in part because the *tools* to think about it were lacking. This is precisely what the preferred alternative and minimal requirements offer: a tool to deliberate on policy changes. They give a structured way to think about these issues, and they give the argumentative vocabulary to argue in favour (or against) a certain course of action. In the case of Iraq, as minimal requirements and preferred alternative had never been made explicit, it would have been hard to explain why the policy now proposed by Blair was substantially different from that initially pursued. As minimal requirements had never been articulated, it was harder to argue that they had not been fulfilled.

This lack of minimal requirements and preferred alternative matters in two distinct ways. It makes it harder to analyse the problem without the vocabulary offered in this dissertation. It is also harder to convincingly argue about such a problem. Thus, the lack of well-established preferred alternative and minimal requirements was one root cause of why Britain went ahead with the invasion under conditions it would have previously deemed unacceptable. These dynamics of the negotiation explain why London went to war in March 2003 despite the obvious political costs, despite the lack of clear plan, and despite the moral problems of overthrowing a regime with no good plans for the next stage.

4. ... WITHOUT GOOD PLANS

To explain how the United Kingdom ended up having poor plans is to presume that the plans were bad indeed. Two preliminary questions must therefore be answered. By what *metric* were the plans bad? In other words: what is the yardstick by which the quality of the plans should be judged and deemed unsuitable? Secondly, in what sense were the plans bad? In other words, *how* did the plans deviate from what they should have looked like? With the

¹⁰⁹⁹ Short, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 February 2010”, 84.
Prescott, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 30 July 2010”, 21.

problem thus identified, we can examine how it came about. The specific argument of this chapter is that for Britain's Iraq invasion, the plans were bad because the planning process was severely hampered by the lack of a clear policy position. This made the plans incoherent across government departments as well as unsuitable for the invasion.

Good plans: a minimal standard

To argue that Britain prepared badly for its potential invasion of Iraq (by not defining a preferred alternative and derive minimal requirements from this alternative) and that its plans were bad as a result, begs the question: what exactly do I mean by 'bad' plans? As indicated earlier, the metric used in this dissertation is *not* the eventual success or lack thereof of the Iraq invasion itself: success or lack thereof in an invasion does not depend solely on the preparation one has done. Rather, I look at several conditions of the plans themselves. Those conditions, I argue, have a *propensity* to bring about good results.

Indeed, good plans tend to have several characteristics that makes them more prone to success. On the flipside, bad plans tend to not have these characteristics. Good plans are internally coherent. They do not contradict themselves. By contrast, mutually incoherent or internally contradictory plans are worse for having those characteristics. Good plans are not only internally coherent (based on assumptions that are mutually compatible): they also rationally connect ends and means. Good plans have *appropriate* strategies to achieve set policy goals. Strategies or plans that are inappropriate for the problem they are meant to solve, are bad plans, *even if* they are internally coherent.

Good plans also need to be well developed. Policy-makers and planners need to have thought through the events in enough detail to understand what each step requires. They need to know what resources they depend on, whether these are available, and how to get them. They need to know what action needs to be taken when. They need to be aware of problems and have time to think of solutions. Of course, that does not mean that good plans need to foresee every single eventuality or step along the way. Determining the exact level of preparation needed is a matter of expertise and judgment, more art than science. Nonetheless, the principle is clear. Because they cannot readily and confidently be executed, plans that are underdeveloped or incomplete amount to bad plans.

In other words, at the very least plans should be well-developed; internally coherent; and appropriately connecting means to the policy goal that is meant to be achieved. Note that this metric of 'good' planning is a minimal standard. It is not concerned with evaluating policy goals as such: it is concerned with whether the *plans* are good, not whether the *policy* as a

whole is a good idea. The metric is also a satisficing rather than a maximizing metric. In other words, it looks at whether the plans are likely to give a good solution, not whether they are likely to give the *best* solution. For any given policy problem, several plans might fit this criterion, even if some are better than others. However, this being such a 'low' standard for good policy plans is not a weakness. On the contrary: this minimalist metric should be more readily accessible under all circumstances. A minimum standard is not meant to push policy and plans to the best they can be; it is meant to understand – and therefore prevent – the most egregious failures.

In evaluating British Iraq policy by this metric, the question is not whether it was the best possible policy, with the best possible plans. Rather, the question is whether it was good enough. It was not. British Iraq plans failed on all three accounts. The plans were mutually incoherent and contradictory. They were incomplete and underdeveloped. They failed to provide an answer to the policy goal they were meant to address. The implication of this argument is that Britain failed not only because it chose to invade Iraq at all. There was an additional, separate mistake: the failure to prepare well. Even those who defend the invasion would have to account for this separate failure. And even those who argue that the peace in Iraq could not be won anyway, for internal Iraqi reasons, need to contend with British internal failures in 2001-2003 before giving the country a pass on its Iraq failure.

The different failures in London's war plan are linked to each other, which makes it somewhat artificial to discuss them as if they were distinct problems – although it certainly highlights the internal inconsistency of the plans and planning. In any case, we have discussed individual departments' preparation and rationales in earlier chapters; here we are concerned with evaluating British policy *as a whole*. A few aspects stand out. There was inconsistency in the policy goal that the Ministry of Defence was preparing for: it swayed from disarmament to disarmament and stabilisation. The latter would have needed to happen with the help of others. To the extent that the Ministry of Defence should have prepared stabilisation of post-war Iraq and reconstruction, it did not do so.

The preparation was mutually contradictory between departments. The general feeling was that *someone* would – or at least should – oversee the post-war effort as a whole, but departments diverged in their interpretation of who would be responsible. The Department for International Development was also underprepared for the post-war phase, although here again, the extent to which it was underprepared depends on one's reading of how much any single department ought to have done. For Whitehall as a whole, the result was that Britain was underprepared and misprepared. The plans being unsuitable for the invasion

that was happening in March 2003 was something that British politicians either failed to understand (probably most of them) or chose to ignore (perhaps some of them).

Failure to prepare relevant plans: Ministry of Defence

More so than any other department, the Ministry of Defence was in tune with the Iraq policy that the UK government pursued in the end, as the military needed to focus only on the possibility of war (not on the possibility of avoiding war), and prepare accordingly. It did so from April 2002 onwards. Nonetheless, its preparation was harmed by the lack of clarity on Britain's policy position. The badly defined policy goal led to half-preparation. Britain's overall desire was to eliminate the risk emanating from the Baghdad regime. Such a broad desideratum, of course, needs to be translated into more concrete policy goals. The minimalist line taken by the British government was 'disarmament': making sure Saddam Hussein would no longer possess any weapons of mass destruction (which turned out not to be present). This specifically meant that Great Britain would *not* be pursuing regime change, and more generally would not break international law. Regime change could of course be a side effect of disarmament. When pushed on Britain's ambition in Iraq, civil servants and politicians across the board have referred to this notion of disarmament and disarmament only.

Except that London *also* really wanted something best described as 'disarmament+'. On the one hand, there seems to have been awareness of all the risks and costs of a policy that was too broadly defined.¹¹⁰⁰ On the other hand, disarmament of Saddam Hussein was part of a wider vision or hope for Iraq that included bringing it back into the international community, making it democratic, having it respect human rights, including minority and women's rights, and making it stable (as if all these features necessarily co-occur). Bringing about such a vision would entail a much bigger military commitment and a significantly longer campaign.

The notion of 'disarmament only' is what allowed British politicians to believe that the invasion could be mounted in the time frame set up. It also goes together with the idea that Britain would be able to draw down shortly after the invasion. Politicians hoped that a big contribution in the war-fighting phase – the third package – would avoid them being pressured into a larger and more expensive commitment in the post-war phase.¹¹⁰¹ However, the military top suspected from the beginning that London would be in Iraq for longer than it was formally envisaging. Chief of Defence Staff Boyce thought that the Defence Review –

¹¹⁰⁰ Tebbit and Boyce, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 3 December 2009", 101-102.

¹¹⁰¹ Paul Boateng, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 14 July 2010," 2010, 28.
Adam Ingram, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 16 July 2010," 2010, 7.

which assumed a drawdown to brigade level after six months – was unrealistic for the campaign in Iraq. He expected foreign military forces to be needed in Iraq for at least three or four years.¹¹⁰² So although the stated ambition was disarmament and disarmament only, the military was not fooled by this. Its personnel understood fully well that after Phase III, Phase IV would be coming and it would be at least as problematic as winning the war. The military spent a significant amount of time preparing for the post-invasion phase and also pressed the topic with its counterpart in the United States.¹¹⁰³

If the military understood what policy intentions towards Baghdad were likely to *actually* entail, then how does the ambiguity of the stated policy goal matter? Is it not irrelevant if the military knew what it should be preparing for? It is not. The ambiguity matters because it is precisely this ambiguity that allowed the military to signal readiness in the immediate run-up to the war. In the days before the invasion, all British commanders on the ground signalled to Commander Robin Brims that their units were ready.¹¹⁰⁴ In fact, they were ready only for the invasion: to get into the country and overthrow Saddam Hussein to search for, secure and destroy any weapons of mass destruction. They were *not* ready for much of what was to follow beyond that. Yet because the policy goal was disarmament, the fiction could be maintained that the troops were in fact prepared and ready. Had they been forced to judge whether they were ready to occupy a country and transform it, they would have been very hard-pressed to be as optimistic.

Of course, the blame here cannot rest solely with the military, even as its ‘can-do’ attitude might in this case have been harmful. Just as the military has a professional duty to explain to its civilian superiors the limits of its capacities and planning, so too politicians have a duty to genuinely inquire and try to understand what the military is ready for – and what it is not ready for. The point is a different one: with less ambiguity about the policy goal, it would have been more difficult for Armed Forces and politicians to agree that the military was ready to enact British policy in Iraq. With a more explicit understanding that minimal requirements matter and need to be communicated bottom-up as well as top-down, the military could have been much more explicit in signalling to Cabinet what it was ready for (the invasion to topple Saddam) and was not ready for (any civilian tasks that would need to happen in Phase IV and thereafter; bringing about democracy).

¹¹⁰² Tebbit and Boyce, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 3 December 2009”, 101-102.

¹¹⁰³ Ibid., 98-99.

¹¹⁰⁴ Burridge and Brims, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009”, 17-21.

Many in military circles have been quick to blame the Department of International Development for its alleged attitude problems, its failure to understand military needs, or its failure to prepare for the post-invasion phase.¹¹⁰⁵ There is some justification for that (although the military was manifestly even worse at understanding the conditions that the Department for International Development works under). Nonetheless, the military cannot abdicate all blame for the post-war phase while simultaneously arguing that it ‘spent as many hours working on our Phase 4, on aftermath planning, as we did actually on the actual main battle plan of winning the war’.¹¹⁰⁶ In that case, clearly the military thought it had some responsibilities for that part of the invasion. Its frantic interlocation with the Americans about their lack of Phase 4 planning indicates the same. The Ministry of Defence was underprepared.

Failure to prepare relevant plans: Department for International Development

All plans of DFID were based on the assumption that the United Nations would be present – indeed have a leading role – in post-war Iraq. By necessity, the plans also relied on funding coming in through the United Nations, if only because the Treasury was reluctant to release money to DFID (it eventually did, but not as much as it released to the military for post-war work). These assumptions were not justified. Thus, the plans that relied on them were unsuited for the invasion as it happened. DFID’s failure to prepare relevant plans was a direct consequence of the preferred alternative being undefined. The department assumed that if the Security Council would not agree to invade, the next best option was to abandon disarmament rather than the United Nations. As it turned out, the opposite happened. Whatever plans had been made for the reconstruction now were not only underdeveloped, but also unsuitable.

Failure to prepare coherent plans: Ministry of Defence and Department for International Development

Whitehall as a whole was underprepared for what needed to happen after the fall of Baghdad; but there was also a failure to prepare *coherent* plans. The Ministry of Defence and the Department for International Development, specifically, had conflicting ideas about aspects of the planning. These conflicts centred on responsibility for, and timing of, reconstruction. As highlighted in Chapter IV, the military expected civilians, notably DFID, to start coming in for reconstruction soon after the situation was stabilized. It also felt that the department was not doing enough work, both in advance and on the ground. The people of

¹¹⁰⁵ Tebbit and Boyce, “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 3 December 2009”, 105.

¹¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 98-99.

DFID were accused of just staying in their tents, and Clare Short was accused of obstructing the war effort.¹¹⁰⁷ In reality, despite Clare Short indeed being very critical of the government's policy (but not about the idea of removing Saddam Hussein), the department had many unrelated difficulties that prevented it from preparing well, and several constraints that the military did not understand.

The Department for International Development suffered from late access to information and the war happening much sooner than (it) expected. It also is a very small department with limited capacity. DFID was not invited to or informed of the 23 July 2002 meeting at which military options were discussed.¹¹⁰⁸ Its first invitation to a cross-Whitehall meeting was only in September 2002. When its Secretary of State Clare Short asked for briefings on the progress of military planning, she was habitually rebuffed.¹¹⁰⁹ The department was banned from discussing planning with outside parties until October 2002, when the ban was partially lifted.¹¹¹⁰ This was also when civil servants discovered that there was virtually no post-war plan by the British military or its American counterparts. The magnitude of the planning gap became fully clear only in December 2002, when Tim Cross (Ministry of Defence) came to DFID to discuss the severity of the problems.¹¹¹¹ Secretary of State Short took the issue up with the Prime Minister; Permanent Secretary Chakrabarti did the same with foreign policy advisor David Manning.¹¹¹² By January 2003, communication and cooperation between the Ministry of Defence and the Department for International Development improved.

So the department had to wait six months longer than the Ministry of Defence before it was let in on the planning that was going on in other departments. Even then, its staff was continuously reassured that the United Nations route would be followed. Quite understandably, the civil servants of the department, like their Secretary of State, assumed that this meant that war, if it were to happen, was a long time away: the Security Council clearly seemed nowhere near authorizing an invasion. Despite not having access to the overall policy plan and planning, the department did start planning for a humanitarian contingency. Humanitarian crises are a departmental core responsibility for DFID.

¹¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 105.

¹¹⁰⁸ Short, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 February 2010", 15.

¹¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 15-16.

¹¹¹⁰ Chakrabarti, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 13.
Miller, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 21 July 2010", 17.

Short, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 February 2010", 52.

¹¹¹¹ Chakrabarti, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 18.

¹¹¹² Ibid., 19.

The department started preparing for a humanitarian emergency in Iraq *before* it was brought into the fold of Whitehall planning. It was interacting discreetly with NGOs and the United Nations even when it did not yet have permission to do so.¹¹¹³ In other words, rather than shy away from engaging with the issue of Iraq, the department at that time was trying to contribute to policy even before it was asked or allowed to do so. Yet clearly, without a clear view on the exact policy that was to be followed, and without permission to use its normal channels to prepare for the policy, the department had very limited options. The department's struggle to prepare for the potential humanitarian crisis after an invasion of Iraq was thus actively hampered by the fact that there was no clear policy line. Because there was no clear position, politicians had to juggle two alternative readings of the policy, and it meant that the department had to wait for that to be resolved before it could start preparing (although of course the issue never got fully resolved).

Next, let us consider the issue of the department not preparing (well) for reconstruction. Here the impact of the lack of a clear policy position is bigger still. Reconstruction as part of a military campaign falls outside its usual responsibilities, much like it falls outside the responsibility of the military. Indeed, the Foreign Office was the department that seems to have been meant to be responsible for reconstruction. Nonetheless, there was a military expectation that DFID's expertise in this area meant that it would be contributing. However, the department itself only discovered in the latter half of 2002 that there was no post-war planning. This is when the department became aware of the scope of the Iraq problem and began addressing it in earnest, albeit under huge time pressure and while also still working on the humanitarian aspects, the core task.

Clare Short asked for the money necessary for any plans, but the Treasury was consistently unwilling to give it.¹¹¹⁴ DFID was meant to take money out of its own budget (and indeed ended up spending most of its emergency budget on Iraq), but of course this did not work for reconstruction.¹¹¹⁵ For one, using the money meant for poverty relief on rebuilding Iraq into a democracy meant flouting the departmental mission and metric by which money is allocated; secondly, the sums needed for reconstruction were orders of magnitude bigger than the department's budget. A further problem was that the department not only made limited plans; the plans it made were also based on wrong assumptions, and thus unsuitable for the invasion as it happened.

¹¹¹³ Short, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 February 2010", 53-56.

¹¹¹⁴ Ibid., 70-71.

¹¹¹⁵ Keeble, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry", 2.

To be clear, not all the friction between the military and Clare Short was caused by a lack of preferred alternative and minimal requirements. Personalities played a role, as did the lack of understanding of the constraints of the other department (mostly the military's failure or refusal to understand DFID's mission and departmental structure).¹¹¹⁶ However, the undefined policy position exacerbated these problems. For the military, the preferred alternative was not very relevant: it prepared only for the war that would overthrow Saddam Hussein (and, with limited output, it spent time on the post-war phase). If the war would not happen, the military would not have to fight it, but that did not change much in terms of their preparation.

Those doing the planning – military men, not the civilian heads of the Ministry of Defence – were unconcerned with politics. For DFID, clarity about the preferred alternative was crucial. The political fight mattered a lot more, not only to Clare Short, but also to the department's capacity for preparation. The military had little understanding. A clearer policy position would have prevented the lack of clarity and mispreparation of the department. It would have also brought political tensions and the policy discussion to head a lot earlier, which regardless of the outcome would have been better for clear and appropriate planning. It is possible that this would not have been enough to avoid problems between the two departments, but it certainly would have provided fewer triggers for annoyance, misunderstanding and conflicts.

Failure to prepare well-developed plans: Ministry of Defence, Department for International Development, Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Why did the Foreign Office – which *ought* to have overseen the overall post-war effort¹¹¹⁷ – not have well-developed plans for the aftermath? The Foreign Office was working on a difficult balancing act: it was meant to get Baghdad to disarm peacefully, a goal that always seemed highly unlikely. At the same time, *because* that seemed so unlikely, the Foreign Office was busy creating circumstances under which Saddam Hussein could be disarmed: a united

¹¹¹⁶ Chakrabarti, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009", 39.

¹¹¹⁷ Macpherson, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry: HM Treasury Involvement in Iraq", 7.

Buck, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry", 3.

Kernaghan, "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry", 5.

Sawers, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 10 December 2009", 19

Jackson, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 28 July 2010", 25.

Brown, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 5 March 2010", 99.

Torpy, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 18 January 2011", 45.

Pattison, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 31 January 2011 (Morning Session)", 106.

Straw, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 February 2011", 49.

White, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 21 July 2010", 34.

Kernaghan, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 23 July 2010", 17.

Security Council willing to invade. Yet the Security Council would only be convinced if the United States and Britain did *not* look intent on going to war. Only by February 2003 did the Foreign Office set up the cross-Whitehall Iraq Planning/Policy Unit. The unit – ‘too little too late’ – was ‘quickly overwhelmed’ and hit by ‘chaos, lack of coherent planning and a chorus of competing voices.’¹¹¹⁸ In other words, the Foreign Office failed to prepare well because it did not have enough time and manpower.

It did not have enough time and capacity for two reasons. First, it spent (too) much time navigating an unclear policy and dealing with the fact that it was unclear. The lack of single policy position meant that the Foreign Office found it hard to speak with one united and authoritative voice. The British Prime Minister would have been sending radically different messages to Washington. The lack of clearly articulated minimal requirements in the negotiating position of London with its trans-Atlantic partner equally meant that Foreign Office officials wasted a lot of time re-negotiating conditions and pleading for elements they should have been able to take for granted. Negotiation capital, time and effort was wasted because of the badly developed preferred alternative and lacking corresponding minimal requirements.

Second, the timing was simply too short. This was exacerbated by the fact that the Iraq Planning Unit was set up only in February 2003, but of course the real drama was that the invasion happened so soon afterward. If Britain had been clearer on its minimal requirements, it would not have invaded without a plan. It might have had a good chance of either postponing the invasion or of simply not participating in March 2003. Yet because of the lack of a clear policy position, the worst of two worlds happened: the Foreign Office was not prepared because of all the time wasted as a result of not having a clear position. At the same time, *also* because it did not have a clear position, London did not pull out of the war. So, with its lack of preferred alternative and minimal requirements, London both pressurised itself into attacking Baghdad *and* made sure it was not ready to do so.

Failure to appreciate the limitations of the preparation: Political understandings of the plans

Lastly, let us consider the bottom-up process. As explained in the last section, limitations to foreign policy are not only the result of choices made by the political top. They are also the result of planning, both in the long and in the short term. In the long term, budget allocations,

¹¹¹⁸ Pattison, “Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry”, 14.

Cross, “Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry: ‘Post-Invasion Iraq: The Planning and the Reality After the Invasion From Mid-2002 to the End of August 2003.’”, 14.

built up expertise, the structure of Whitehall itself... all impact policy choices. A military specialised in reconstruction would do very differently than a pure fighting force. The choice to bundle development expertise into one department that has the specific duty to use that expertise to combat poverty matters too for the culture and further use of the people and expertise in that department. In the short term, too, plans and planning matter. If a department is tasked with the preparation for a humanitarian crisis, its preparation will impact what can happen on the ground. Is the focus on epidemics or on the provision of clean water? Is there an action plan to combat forced prostitution in refugee camps or is the focus on education? Where time and money are limited, those priorities amount to real choices and policy differences.

It is therefore important that politicians be aware of the policy choices and limitations that follow from the plans prepared by the Civil Service. It is also important that they understand the assumptions on which planning is based, so that they can evaluate whether the plans can withstand a change of policy. In the case of the Iraq invasion, this was clearly not the case. The plans, as prepared by all departments, could not withstand a change to invasion without the Security Council (they would likely have been able to withstand a change to the Security Council without the invasion). They were not good enough for an invasion as early as March 2003. Yet these limitations did not influence politicians' considerations much, it seems. They certainly did not change policy.

What would it have looked like for the departments to communicate the minimal requirements in the policy plans? How could this have helped foreign policy-making? Perhaps some people would argue that it is impossible to communicate *all* the conditions that underlie policy plans. However, a preferred alternative and minimal requirements are helpful in this precisely because they communicate which conditions ought to be communicated. For example, if the Department for International Development had known that Britain *would* be willing to go to war without the genuine support of the Security Council and the wider United Nations, it would have been much easier for the department to understand that it ought to warn politicians that the plans can only work with the United Nations.

Having a preferred alternative also streamlines the preparation and execution of policies by putting everyone on the same page; by better using departments' expertise; by improving the recognition and thereby possibilities for communication of the most relevant information from government to civil service and vice versa. Civil servants need to understand the limits of decisions, because they have knowledge that the people at the top do not have. Only when

they know what is and is not perceived as a minimal requirement at the top, can they (a) plan accordingly and (b) point out if any intrinsic minimal requirements follow from the planning and warn their political heads of this.

5. CONCLUSION

Consider the following brief questionnaire. What would you answer? What would have been the answers of the Prime Minister, his confidantes, the Secretaries of State, and the Permanent Secretaries of the departments working on Iraq throughout 2002 and 2003?

1. By invading Iraq, does the British government want to achieve ...?

- (a) disarmament
- (b) regime change
- (c) stability in the Middle East
- (d) a reduction of the risk of terrorism to the United Kingdom
- (e) a better human rights situation for the Iraqi people
- (f) democracy in Iraq
- (g) all of the above

2. Tick all that apply. Britain would not go to war if

- ☐ it is illegal
- ☐ the Security Council disagrees/there is no legitimacy
- ☐ the United Nations do not get a lead role in the post-invasion phase
- ☐ there is no 'winning concept'/clear plan
- ☐ there is no clear plan that matches the end goal

3. If the disarmament of Baghdad, with the support of the Security Council, is not achievable, what is London's preferred choice?

- (a) disarmament without the Security Council
- (b) the Security Council without disarmament

The questions above cannot be answered with certainty. That is problematic. It shows that Britain's 2001-2003 Iraq policy was marred by uncertainty about key aspects: the policy goal, the preferred alternative to a negotiated agreement with the Security Council and the United States, and minimal requirements. As argued in this chapter and throughout the

dissertation, that failure to have a clear policy position resulted in London invading Iraq without well-developed, suitable plans for the phase after the removal of the old regime.

Not having a clear policy position meant trouble in two distinct ways which exacerbates each other. First, it harmed London's negotiations on the international scene. This dissertation has focused on how that damaged its negotiations with the United States, but the argument can be extended to Britain's botched negotiations with other members of the Security Council. Without a clear and well-developed alternative, London policy-makers could not know when to push and when to fold during negotiations. The negotiations went badly: British conditions were not fulfilled but the country's analysis of the Baghdad problem remained the same. Without fully defined policy position, policy makers had no metric to know whether they should change their policy or not. No defined alternative has been prepared for, practically or mentally. Unsurprisingly, London ended up going with the option that looked closest to what it had prepared, even though an invasion was now happening under conditions that would have previously been deemed unacceptable.

Second, the uncertainty and misunderstandings reverberated through the Civil Service departments responsible for preparing the plans. As a result, their plans were mutually contradictory, underdeveloped, and unsuitable for the circumstances under which the invasion happened. Plans ought to be internally coherent, well-developed, and logically related to – appropriate for – the issue they are addressing. The Ministry of Defence's plan was not completely appropriate for the wider policy goal of stabilizing Iraq because it related only to the policy goal as defined more narrowly, which was disarmament. The plans of the Department for International Development and the Ministry of Defence contradicted each other on the timing of civilian contributions to the military campaign. This was because the departments had different interpretations of London's preferred alternative and minimal requirements. The plans were underdeveloped, not least because Britain went to war earlier than it wanted to. The Foreign Office also lost much time and capacity on fruitless negotiation with the Americans, trying to compensate for a lack of clear conditions. The Department for International Development's plans were to a significant extent irrelevant, again because they were based on the false premises of an undefined policy position. Politicians failed to appreciate the limits in Whitehall's plans.

In one sentence, then, the failure to have a clear policy position led to the following problematic combination of problems: it made Britain less ready to fight this war, *and* it made it more likely to fight it. In other words, it was the root cause of two types of problems that together were the worst of both worlds. This analysis of London's Iraq policy failure

addresses the central research question set out in the introduction (why was London seemingly unprepared for the conflict in Iraq, which it chose to pursue?). It also makes a wider argument. In arguing that London failed in 2002-2003 because of the lack of policy position, it draws attention to the concept and importance of policy positions. This dissertation has argued that politicians should not merely consider their goals and strategies when making foreign policy. In addition, a preferred alternative and minimal requirements should be constructed equally carefully. This is an important safeguard once policy goes completely off track; but it is also an important safeguard to *prevent* policy going off track.

The idea that a best alternative to a negotiated agreement is helpful both as a back-up plan *and* to help initial negotiations was launched by the Harvard Negotiation Project in the late 1970s. This chapter has argued that the insight of the Negotiation Project applies to governments too; but crucially, preferred alternatives and their corresponding minimal requirements have additional benefits in government. Governments and the civil services implementing their policies are a collage of minds. In such circumstances, preferred alternatives and minimal requirements are an easy heuristic to keep everyone on the same page and reduce both purposeful and accidental divergence from the shared policy line. It should – and quite easily can – be widely implemented.

Conclusion: Failure to Prepare Well

1. INTRODUCTION

This conclusion consists of four sections. The first is a brief summary of the findings. The focus here is naturally on the three empirical chapters (III-V) and the chapter analysing this narrative of the war (IV), that draws together the argument that runs through the dissertation as a whole. These empirical chapters cover how decisions-makers decided on war; how civil service departments subsequently prepared for war; and how the execution of those plans unfolded once the British had crossed the Iraqi border alongside their American counterparts. Overall, it answers the research question laid out in the introduction: how did it come about that the British government seemingly failed to prepare for a war of choice, when the Prime Minister seemed to attach so much importance to this invasion? It does so by showing how the lack of clarity about policy preferences – most notably about the minimal requirements and preferred alternative – led departments to misprepare for the conditions under which it might have to go war. Interdepartmental misunderstandings and unjustified assumptions did not help. The overall picture is one of a multifaceted failure to pursue and implement the policy that the government tried to set.

Next, three (types of) implications of this argument are discussed. The first is that we must distinguish more clearly between determining a foreign policy, implementing it, and selling it. By analysing the gap between determination and realisation of policy, this dissertation also ends up highlighting the difference between how the policy was set and how it was sold in, and told by, the press (and much of the early Iraq literature, which exhibited the same bias). The second is that what happened in the lead-up to the war must be understood as *mispreparation* as well as underpreparation. Thirdly, the role of various key actors is re-evaluated. Tony Blair, I argue, is both less and more of an explanation of what happened. Less, because the problem was not so much what he proposed as the *friction* between those ideas and what Whitehall assumed would happen. More, because this had deeper repercussions than is usually analysed. Furthermore, the military's can-do attitude is highlighted as a source of problems; so is the absence of the Cabinet Office.

The third part summarizes how the concepts of the preferred alternative and minimal requirements can lead to new understandings about the foreign policy-making process. What is stressed here is that the preferred alternative has not only the benefits of the 'best alternative to a negotiated agreement' from which it is derived; it has further, additional benefits for the large organisations trying to coordinate and realise policy. This argument is

constructed as a common-sense prudential guideline. The case of Britain's 2001-2003 Iraq policy is examined following this guideline and, as a near ideal-type example of the failures that can occur without a clear preferred alternative and minimal requirements, highlights the ways in which the absence of a clear preferred alternative can harm policy. Of course, the specific ways in which this plays out are a matter of contingency; not every other policy case will play out in the exact same way as Iraq policy between 2001 and 2003.

The link between the new conceptual lens presented in chapter II and the case study analysed in chapter VI is also discussed in the next section, 'limitations,' where I stress this is not an inductive case study that aims to generalise on the basis of this dissertation's examination of the Iraq war. I discuss the possibility of interviews and the consequences of not having grown up in the United Kingdom, which made the Iraq war a truly foreign case study; I also discuss to what extent a topic that is 15 years old remains relevant today for research. In the conclusion, I briefly summarize the main argumentative steps on which this dissertation was built, and how each contributed to the general argument.

2. FINDINGS

Let us start this conclusion of the dissertation with a brief summary of its reading of the 2001-2003 period and how this understanding of that period answers the research question of Britain's failure to prepare well. In the early noughties, the United Kingdom was reviewing its Iraq policy. The policy of containment on the basis of sanctions, no-fly zones, and incentives to get weapon inspectors into Iraq, was seen to be 'failing and the rate of failure [is] accelerating.'¹¹¹⁹ The British were therefore floating the idea of more targeted, so-called 'smarter sanctions,' which would command larger international support (as their precision would better spare the population) and prove more effective.

However, after 9/11 the United States' administration started concentrating more on foreign affairs and it reviewed its Iraq policy. The internal balance of the Bush administration shifted away from the more moderate State Department to the rather more belligerent policy hawks concentrated mainly in the Pentagon and (around) the Vice-Presidency. Thus, while international consensus on Afghanistan had been relatively easy to find, for Iraq the British government soon saw itself confronted with a dilemma: to what extent should it offer support to a United States administration potentially interested in war with Iraq, and if it should offer support, under what conditions?

¹¹¹⁹ Webb et al., "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 24 November 2009", 65-66.

The answer that emerged in documents from the Foreign Office, which was reviewing Iraq policy under strong impulse from the Prime Minister, was that Britain might support the United States in a quest to disarm Iraq, potentially up to the use of force, if a number of conditions could be fulfilled: the UN route needed to be 'exhausted'; there needed to be progress in the Middle East Peace Process (what that entailed was rather unclear); and the public (both domestically and in the Middle East) needed to be informed and ideally convinced of the merits of the case.¹¹²⁰ Yet as time went on, it became clear that many of those conditions would be unobtainable. Moreover, it became clear that Britain's primary aim – disarming Saddam Hussein with the cooperation of the Security Council, through the threat or use of force – would not be achieved.

This brought to a head the question of Britain's best alternative to disarmament via the Security Council. The Foreign Office and much of Cabinet had presumed that London would not (be able to) participate in an invasion that was not backed explicitly by the Security Council and its members. For the Prime Minister, by contrast, the preferred alternative was disarmament without Security Council support, if this would prove at all feasible (and it proved feasible only because of the remarkable change of heart on the part of the Attorney General). As we know now, the Prime Minister's view prevailed and Britain went to war under circumstances that would have previously been deemed unacceptable.

That is not to say that the Prime Minister's view was completely implemented and the alternative view – in which London would have not gone to war without the genuine support of the Security Council, amongst other conditions – was completely swept aside. On the contrary: as shown in chapter IV, by the time that political decision was taken, much preparation had already happened in the various government departments – and this preparation had oftentimes been done on the presumption that the 'preconditions' that were originally set by London would actually be fulfilled before a British invasion would happen. Indeed, the plans of various government departments *relied* on those conditions.

The British Armed Forces had two major expectations that did not come true. The first was the expectation that in the post-war phase, other actors, including DFID and the international community, would start picking up the bill for the reconstruction of Iraq. The other was the expectation that other international troops would start coming in after the conflict, allowing London to draw down relatively quickly (although perhaps not within the six months

¹¹²⁰ Meyer, "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 26 November 2009", 63-64.
 Chaplin, "Note: 'Iraq: Military Action.'"
 Straw, "Letter to the Prime Minister: 'Iraq: Contingency Planning.'"

assumed in the Strategic Defence Review). The Department for International Development, meanwhile, had started planning relatively late. It was hampered by lack of clarity on the timeline involved and by an initial interdiction of planning with outside partners. However, the department's usual working method was *through* other agencies, by inserting money and expertise into the international system and coordinating and liaising with other institutions. Cooperation with others and the involvement of the United Nations were not just desiderata of DFID's Clare Short: they were necessities if the DFID plans were to work.

The Foreign Office suffered from the lack of clarity about the preferred alternative in a slightly different way. It expended much time and energy trying to avoid a road that would lead to military action, particularly prior to September 2002; after that, its focus shifted to negotiating favourable conditions. This meant that it lacked bandwidth to prepare for the actual eventuality of the invasion itself. Similarly, the Foreign Office had become the policy lead on reconstruction but failed to prepare much. Its Iraq Policy Unit and the Iraq Directorate similarly failed to achieve much. The fact that these coordination mechanisms were in the FCO, meanwhile, is indicative of the role the Cabinet Office played: just like Cabinet itself, it was virtually missing from the preparation of Iraq policy. The British government was not unaware of the problems in the preparation for the war – although it might have not understood the particularities and the details. They were repeatedly flagged up. Yet, despite that, Cabinet acquiesced in the decision to invade.

Once Baghdad was successfully toppled, the reality of the badly prepared and unsuitable plans set in. The military was without civilian support in the weeks after the invasion, compelled to do many activities it had not planned for and did not have the expertise for. The timing of the war and its speed somewhat surprised DFID. The department struggled to cooperate with the American civilians in Iraq. The department also struggled with the lack of resources and without the partner it had expected: the United Nations. Other countries were slow to come in and contribute to the American-British presence in Iraq.

Precisely *how* the weak circumstances in which the (post-)invasion happened might have contributed to the insurgencies that soon emerged, falls outside the scope of this dissertation. The metric by which I judge the success of the plans, is whether they were appropriate, coherent, well-developed – not whether the conflict was won. The point here is that the British had gone to war with plans that did not match the circumstances in which they were deployed; this mismatch can be traced back to the Britain had about its preferred alternative if the first pursued policy of disarmament via the Security Council were to fail. This unclarity led to some departments, in the meantime, making plans based on wrong assumptions; to

departments having mismatched expectations of each other (MOD and DFID); to the FCO not having the space to prepare for the invasion and the post-war phase itself. This lack of clarity also hampered British policy-makers when they decided to go to war under conditions they would have previously deemed unacceptable: as Britain had effectively negotiated itself into a corner, it had no clear view of what alternatives it had beyond that which *looked* most like the original policy.

How does all this answer the research puzzle laid out in Chapter I? This dissertation aimed to illuminate the curious failure of the British government to prepare well for an invasion of its choice. This failure is curious precisely because the government *chose to* go to war with Iraq and could have easily (at least in the earlier stages of the run-up to March 2003) decided *not* to join the United States in its attack on Baghdad. Indeed, the British government joining the invasion was in itself a subject that has given rise to much examination because in many ways, it was a breach with foreign policy as traditionally pursued by the British state, by Labour, and even, in some senses, by the New Labour government of Tony Blair, with its penchant for a strong, united international community.

That is not to say that the decision to invade did not show elements of continuity: as many have commented, it did. In many senses, the challenge posed by Iraq fitted the Prime Minister and his frame of thought, as established at length in chapter I. But portraying the invasion of Iraq as an obvious default choice for the British government in 2002 would clearly be a stretch. This is precisely why it is curious that London also seemed badly prepared for the invasion. Why would a Prime Minister be willing to put his government on the line, but not ensure that the policy can actually be a success?

If readings of the Iraq war can generally be divided into stories of cover-ups and stories of mess-ups, this dissertation clearly falls on the side that interprets British Iraq policy as the second type of story. However, the story it sketches is not one of personal deficits of the Prime Minister to explain the failure to prepare well. Instead, there was a structural failure to prepare well. This failure to prepare appropriately has been traced back to the lack of a clearly defined, unified policy position. Britain in effect prepared (badly) for one scenario and then executed the other. It is unlikely to the civil service or government at the time fully understood the extent to which this gap between the two ‘alternatives’ caused Britain to be misprepared – indeed, even in their testimony to the Iraq Inquiry witnesses suggest the country was underprepared, simply not ready, rather than also wrongly prepared. However, a systematic analysis of the various departments preparing Britain’s 2001-2003 Iraq policy shows the importance of this factor.

3. IMPLICATIONS

This dissertation contributes some answers to long-standing issues in the academic debate on the British involvement in the Iraq war; it also addresses issues that had not received enough attention, most importantly the pan-Whitehall view of policy realization. How does the work done in this PhD change, enhance, or nuance our understanding of the lead-up to the war? I will touch on three main implications of this dissertation here. The first is the difference between determining, implementing, and selling policy. Too often, the story of how the Iraq invasion was sold to the British public has been conflated with the narrative of how actual policy was made. As for the determination and implementation of policy, not enough attention has been given to the gap between a stated policy and the execution of that policy. The second implication of this thesis is that London not only underprepared; it also *misprepared* for the invasion. Mispreparation is a different type of problem that is unlikely to be solved by simply more time. The third discussion centres on various actors in this foreign policy episode and how their role must be evaluated.

Difference between determining, implementing, and selling policy

This picture painted here of the lead-up to the war focused not only on the political decision-making process and on the main political actors involved; nor did it focus (almost) exclusively on the preparation done by the military. Its focus on the interaction between politics and civil service, between ambitions and the practical enactment of those ambitions, highlighted the gap that can exist between those. It calls for a more systematic examination of such a gap, both in other instances of foreign policy and in further research about the British participation in the war in Iraq. Too often so far, British failure in Iraq has been attributed squarely to the decision of war itself. This obfuscates the fact that many of the problems Britain experienced in the lead-up to the invasion, which in turn led it to be badly prepared when that invasion took place, were not in fact problems that resulted from the idea of war itself, but rather from the way in which that decision was reached, and more precisely, the way in which the political decision-making process impacted the practical preparation for any policy.

But this dissertation, by tracing in great detail the intra- and interdepartmental preparation for war, indirectly has another implication as well: that the story of how the war was made, differs from the way in which the war was *sold*. The selling of the Iraq war is a subject of its own right; one that perhaps has received more attention than the actual policy-making process itself (especially in the sense that early works on the events based themselves in no

small extent on reports in the press and were strongly influenced by the dynamic of how the war was sold). A more systematic process on what policy-makers were doing, helps to distinguish between those dynamics. One can observe, for example, the dearth of references to Alastair Campbell in this work. This is not because he was not a key figure in the Blair government and indeed in the wider Iraq story; however, his role in determining the policy, as opposed to selling it, was rather more limited.

Mispreparation, not merely underpreparation

This focus on the plans made by Whitehall also allows us to better understand the nature of Britain's planning failure. It is well understood that the British (like the Americans) were underprepared for the task that awaited them in spring 2003. This comes as no surprise, given the enormity of the task before them and the time pressure they were under (although it must be stressed that the time pressure seemed to come at least partly from the American *military*). Less well understood, perhaps, is the extent to which Britain *mis*prepared. It is not just that the preparations that were made were not sufficient; part of the problem was the much preparation was either irrelevant, because it was conceived for execution under circumstances which ended up not happening, or internally contradictory, notably because of interdepartmental misassumptions about each other's role, duties, and capabilities.

This matters because there is a narrative that suggests that Britain was set up for failure right from the beginning of the attack on Baghdad because lack of time did not allow for proper preparation. If, by contrast, part of the problem was not simply the *under*preparation for the war, but also the *mis*preparation, then it is not obvious that more time would have been sufficient to mitigate those harms. Rather, what was needed was more clarity at an earlier stage about the preferred alternative; about the conditions under which departments could expect the invasion to be waged; and the role and responsibilities of each part of government and civil service within this context. More time might of course have helped for certain aspects of the policy (and certainly there was underpreparation as well as mispreparation); but mispreparation is a fundamentally different problem from mere lack of preparation.

The role of various actors

A new examination of the Iraq episode will inevitably entail a new interpretation of the role various actors played. This dissertation is no exception. I will highlight only a few aspects here. The first person under examination must perhaps be the Prime Minister. Does this dissertation change our understanding of his role in the conflict? In many senses, this

dissertation confirms the picture sketched by journalists, biographers, and academics – unsurprisingly, as the focus was not on Tony Blair. He emerges here like elsewhere as the driver of British Iraq policy who pushed it in new directions that were nonetheless consistent with earlier features of his government and his personality.

However, this dissertation does stress that one Prime Minister doth not a policy make and while other authors have stressed this before, they mostly examined the structural features the shaped the Prime Minister's views and the environment in which he could make policy. This dissertation, by contrast, does not aim to explain why Blair did what he did. Rather, it stresses that the Iraq preparation failure can only be properly understood by looking at the *difference* between Tony Blair's view on Iraq policy and the assumptions of others. It is this friction rather than the Prime Minister's pursued policy in and of itself that explains much of the dynamic in Whitehall. Crucially, this friction mattered not only in the process of determining UK policy; it had important ramifications for the process and outcomes of realizing and implementing that policy.

This means Tony Blair's role was both more limited and more far-reaching than could be assumed without looking at the implementation phase. It was more limited in the sense that the policy preparation that was done, was *not* a realistic reflexion of what Tony Blair was arguing for. It was a hybrid and many of the problems stemmed precisely from this hybridity. On the other hand, however, examining the civil service working in the period between September 2001 and March 2003 brings to light the depth and severity of the consequences of Tony Blair's Iraq policy. Not only did his drive, in many senses so incompatible with British habits and the value more usually attached to international law, impact the policy-making process, and send British troops into Iraq. The way in which he pushed this view *also* made it substantially more difficult to prepare well for this challenge. In other words, one might quip that he was worsening problems that without him would not have existed in the first place.

The role of the military, too, deserves a critical look. The women and men that were sent to Iraq were widely perceived as having been treated unfairly by politicians who made unreasonable decisions and demands. At the same time, the military itself signalled its readiness to take on the war in Iraq, conflating a short-term goal of toppling the regime with a long-term goal of stability. It was not prepared for the latter, despite the latter ostensibly being a part of its goals. Professional armed forces must accept civilian authority; however, they also have a professional responsibility to at least signal the limits of their capacity expressly, as well as a professional responsibility to signal the impossibility of plans as they are on the table. The military's can-do attitude, much admired, cannot absolve it of its

professional obligation to serve its civilian superiors not only by obedience, but by clear communication about its realistic capacity to do what is asked of it.

This dissertation also highlights that the participation of political actors matters not only for those actors to be present, but also so that the organisations that support those actors are present. The replacement of Cabinet by a sofa government not only mattered because it bypassed Cabinet as a decision-making institution of British politics. It also impacted Iraq policy by taking the Cabinet *Office* out of the picture. This vanishing Cabinet Office failed to coordinate policy; the task subsequently fell to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, but the FCO was already overstretched in its pursuit of an Iraq policy on the basis of unclear minimal requirements and with no clear plan-B. Likewise, the involvement of the United Nations was crucial not only for the political legitimacy it would bring, but for the structures and expertise it would bring. Without the United Nations to partner with, DFID struggled to find a suitable partner and to be able to do its normal work.

4. NEW UNDERSTANDINGS ABOUT THE FOREIGN POLICY-MAKING PROCESS

This dissertation introduced a new lens to analyse and make foreign policy: a lens which considers not only the policy goal and strategy of any given policy but demands a preferred alternative to that chosen course and the corresponding minimal requirements for maintaining the policy that was originally set out. Policy-makers benefit from determining their preferred alternative and their minimal requirements because they need a clear idea of the circumstances under which they ought to abandon their charted policy course and considering the preferred alternative is the best way of determining what those minimal requirements should be. This argument is a variation and elaboration on the concept of the 'best alternative to a negotiated agreement', or BATNA, initially put forward by Ury and Fisher in the Harvard Negotiation Project.

There are two types of benefits that policy-makers derive from this lens. The first type are all the benefits that Fisher and Ury already associated with the good use of a BATNA: it gives you a clear standard against which to compare the policy you are currently pursuing to assess its merit. A BATNA prevents people from being overly optimistic or pessimistic about the outcomes of a (implicit) negotiation – and virtually all interactions in the foreign policy realm are some form of negotiation – and thus gives them a more level-headed view of their options. BATNAs can also improve one's negotiation position by providing a clear, implementable alternative as they nudge parties to consider and develop those.

The second type of benefit accrues to large organizations using a preferred alternative. Such a defined preferred alternative to the policy that is being pursued is an efficient short-cut way to understand and convey to all involved the limits of the policy and the priorities that underlie it. It can mitigate the risk of accidental policy drift and plans that are incompatible between departments as they are based on varying interpretation of the policy that is being pursued and the conditions under which it might be enacted. Having the vocabulary of preferred alternatives and minimal requirements also makes it easier to highlight and discuss these types of problems when they occur: fissures in policy thus become easier to spot.

The original concept of the BATNA as set out by Ury and Fisher is widely used by negotiators over the world. The adaptations I made in this dissertation to articulate how and why the concept also can be made to work for organizations making foreign policy, with additional benefits, is similarly straightforward. Most importantly, it allows analysts and policy-makers alike to articulate how the *absence* of certain elements can cause problems. A cursory look at the most pressing problem of the current British government – the negotiation of Brexit, again a divisive topic both domestically and internationally – suggest that here, too, the concept of (the need for) one ‘preferred alternative’ could be useful; indeed, one major difference with the Iraq war is that the debate is already being framed in those terms.

5. LIMITATIONS

Interviews

The first and perhaps most straightforward question is that of interviewing people. Indeed, except for two relatively informal conversations referred to in this dissertation under Chatham House rules, I relied on the testimonies given to the Iraq Inquiry, the documents made available through that inquiry, documents and interviews leaked or published in the press, and the literature on Iraq (including some autobiographies). I also filed a dozen FOI requests, with various levels of success. Certainly, interviews would have enabled me to finetune some elements of the dissertation, fill in further gaps in my understanding, and allowed me to better read between the lines of the Inquiry and witness testimonies.

Interviews would have had their own problems. There are the obvious practical considerations in trying to set up interviews, in particular with the more important actors. This would likely not have been possible. In addition, interviews, especially over a decade later and on a subject as sensitive as the invasion of Iraq, might be unlikely to reveal much new information; more importantly, they are likely to mislead as well as enlighten.

Something is thus to be said for an approach that steps away from the personal, from insight into character and motives, to a point where instead the working of the system of the civil service and its interaction with political decision-making is studied.

Relationship between the prudential guideline and the case study

Chapter II introduces a new argument about the usefulness of preferred alternatives and minimal requirements. I claim this argument is generally applicable to (virtually) all foreign-policy making; yet I discuss only one case in this dissertation. Moreover, the Iraq war was, in many ways, an extreme and unusual episode in British foreign policy-making. It must therefore be stressed that this dissertation's prescription about the good sense of having a preferred alternative is not *derived* from its study of the Iraq invasion. Rather, the guideline is derived from abstract empirical reasoning. Experience shows that policy-makers cannot always predict whether they will be able to achieve their objectives: plan A might fail. The wisdom of knowing your preferred alternative in advance has been amply demonstrated by Ury and Fisher as well as by those putting their advice in practice; I modify this by highlighting *further* benefits that come from a preferred alternative when this alternative is being used by organisations while Ury and Fisher focused on individuals. In other words, my prudential guideline is based on Ury and Fisher's guideline as well as on standard empirical assumptions about the world and foreign policy.

This means that I do not rely on the Iraq case study to demonstrate the validity of my proposition. Rather, this case illustrates the actual workings of my argument in one concrete case. The guideline does not rely on the specifics of the Iraq case. Nor will the failure to follow this prudential rule always manifest itself like it did in 2001-2003. Indeed, the guideline only specifies that a lack of well-defined preferred alternative and minimal requirements has a *propensity* to bring about negative consequences. How and how far this propensity will impact a particular instance will be a matter of contingency. In the case of the Iraq war, the impact was severe. This makes the 'preferred alternative' framework a good lens through which to understand the Iraq war; the Iraq war, in turn, illuminates the characteristics and working of the prudential guideline set out in chapter II.

Not growing up in the United Kingdom

I was twelve years old in the period examined in this dissertation. Moreover, I lived in a country that is not a part of the English-speaking world, where the possible invasion of Iraq was perceived by the wider public – from what I recall – as something to be expected from

(the Bush Junior administration of) the United States. The role of the United Kingdom did not get much attention; the general latent opinion seemed to be that the British were a 'light' version of American foreign policy-making. Thus, growing up and in particular after I came to the United Kingdom in 2012, I was surprised to discover that the British involvement in the war had had a dynamic all of its own; that there were major differences between British and American political systems and policy that made the British invasion more puzzling and surprising than that of Washington; nor had I understood at the time of the invasion how deeply divisive the issue was on this side of the North Sea.

I thus had both the advantages and the disadvantages of someone who, to a very large extent, had not lived the contemporary history she was now studying. The advantage was two-fold. The first is a relative lack of preconceived notions about both the British policy-making process and British Iraq policy. Examining a political system that is not your own, based on procedures and traditions that you do not take for granted, makes it easier to observe events, if not with a neutral eye, then at least with a relatively dispassionate eye. The corresponding disadvantage, of course, is that one might occasionally lack subtext and unspoken assumptions (although the academic literature goes a long way to dispelling this problem). Certainly, I have needed a good few biographies and accounts of New Labour politics, British politics, and the Anglo-American relationship before grasping many elements of events. In my description and understanding of certain side-events not central to this dissertation, Nonetheless, I think on balance the benefits compensate the drawbacks.

The second, more specific advantage was the capacity to distinguish between the process of making policy and the process of selling the policy. Conversations with British citizens about my subject matter were routinely rerouted to questions that were based on a particular understanding from the policy-making process that was based on what had appeared in the press in 2002-2003. Certain documents were attributed a disproportionate importance; certain moments were widely perceived as 'gotcha moments' (in which the Prime Minister had 'revealed' his 'true intention') even when they were not, in their content, moments that marked actual policy change. The academic literature, too, exhibits this bias of the first draft of history in its choice of topics and focus. This is not to say that the debate on the selling of the war, and the potential misleading of the British (and international) public, is unimportant. Clearly it is not. But this debate has obfuscated the fact that there is a reasonably clear distinction between the story of how policy was made and how policy was perceived to have been made. My lack of familiarity with the latter at the beginning of the PhD made it easier to analyse the former.

Yesterday's news?

In the political climate of 2017, it seems almost quaint to submit a PhD thesis about the 2003 invasion of Iraq. Nonetheless, the subject remains important in at least two ways. First, the story is an important part of recent British foreign policy and remains relevant not only in that sense, but in its current consequences to not only the United Kingdom, but to Iraq and the wider Middle-Eastern region. As Porter notes: 'As a transforming event, the Iraq war is not over. (...) The overthrow of Saddam Hussein's regime helped trigger a longer-term process of violent sectarian breakdown in the Middle East, the shattering of the state system (...). It left behind many thousands of maimed and wounded survivors.'¹¹²¹

Secondly, the episode not only teaches us important lessons about tragedy and human fallibility (as others have noted); it also has important implications about governmental structural weaknesses in making and implementing decisions. Here, again, what Porter considers the essence of the Iraq Inquiry is equally applicable to this dissertation: 'Beyond rumours of the conspiratorial, and the covert, it is about the quality of decisions.'¹¹²² The specific angle of this dissertation, rather narrower than the Iraq Inquiry, is that it examines the gap between policy ambitions and reality. That gap is made worse by a lack of clear thinking about the preferred alternative a government has to any foreign policy it is pursuing and the implications of this preferred alternative. This lesson might yet prove valuable to the current British government and for current and future policy issues it faces.

6. CONCLUSION

This dissertation described and analysed Britain's 2001-2003 Iraq policy, in particular how it came about that the British troops and civilians in Iraq seemed unprepared for their tasks. The argument is this: the government failed to articulate a clear policy position consisting of a policy goal, strategy, preferred alternative, and minimal requirements. This lack of common understanding, particularly about the preferred alternative, was the root cause of the subsequent problems in Britain's preparation for the Iraq war. It meant that departments and people prepared on the basis of mutually incompatible, unsuitable assumptions. This in turn led to plans that were internally contradictory and unsuited for the invasion as it was eventually pursued by the British government. The dissertation offers insights both about Britain's 2001-2003 Iraq policy in particular and about wider foreign policy. This conclusion

¹¹²¹ Porter, "Lest We Forget: Britain's Iraq Inquiry, and Why It Matters", 683-684.

¹¹²² Ibid., 685.

is therefore divided into two major questions. What did this dissertation tell us about Britain's 2001-2003 Iraq policy? What does that policy tell us about future policy-making?

The analysis regarding 2001-2003 Iraq policy has three essential argumentative steps. One, Britain found itself in highly undesirable circumstances in Iraq when it had few useful plans for the post-war phase, as it discovered almost immediately after major warfighting ceased. Two, this was not simply a matter of being underprepared or being caught in difficult circumstances. London was also *misperpared*: the plans Whitehall had made were both interdepartmentally contradictory and suitable for different circumstances than those in which London eventually invaded. This is a new and more detailed understanding of events. It is based on primary research; most of the sources were made available through the Iraq Inquiry. Three, it was Britain's failure to articulate and pursue a clear preferred alternative and corresponding minimal requirements that accounted for its predicament. This is a new argument about Britain's Iraq policy.

The second part of this conclusion recalls how this analysis of British Iraq policy contributes to our general understanding of foreign policy-making and thereby to future policy. There are four main points here. One, Ury and Fisher introduced the importance of BATNAs in negotiations. My examination of the Iraq case reaffirms the importance of this idea in foreign policy and demonstrates specific (extra) benefits preferred alternatives have when used by organizations like the government. The concept of a preferred alternative and corresponding minimal requirements can strengthen several literatures related to foreign policy-making. Two, the failure to have a preferred alternative is avoidable. On Iraq policy, it would not have been unreasonable to expect Britain to consider a preferred alternative; it is reasonable to expect governments can develop preferred alternatives in future foreign policy instances.

Three, while having a preferred alternative will not guarantee success in future policies (and we cannot prove that a preferred alternative would have been enough to 'save' British Iraq policy), it should be taken seriously in future decision-making because it improves the chances of success. The thesis, therefore, has a potentially wider importance for future policy-making. Four, there are limitations to this research. The dissertation has put forward a prudential guideline and examined it for one particular case. However, the prudential guideline only asserts that a failure to have a preferred alternative will lead to a situation with a propensity towards failure; the specific details of how this happens will be contingent on each case. To get a better sense of the variety of ways in which this prudential rule works, more cases should be examined through this lens.

Bibliography

- Adams, Cathy. "Letter to David Manning: 'Iraq: Attorney-General's Meeting With the Prime Minister, 22 October.'" *Attorney General's Office*, October 23, 2002.
- . "Note: 'Iraq: Meeting with David Manning, 14 October.'" *Attorney General's Office*, October 14, 2002.
- . "Note: 'Iraq: Record of the Attorney General's Telephone Conversation with the Foreign Secretary, 18 October.'" *Attorney General's Office*, October 21, 2002.
- "After the Attack; Reaction From Around the World." *The New York Times*. September 13, 2001. <http://www.nytimes.com/2001/09/13/us/after-the-attack-reaction-from-around-the-world.html>.
- Akande, Dapo. "Submissions to the UK Iraq Inquiry on the Legality of the Iraq War (Updated)." *EJIL*, 2010. <http://www.ejiltalk.org/submissions-to-the-uk-iraq-inquiry-on-the-legality-of-the-iraq-war/>.
- Alderson, Andrew. *Bankrolling Basra*. London: Robinson, 2007.
- "American Morning: Early War Plan; Interview With Representative Gregory Meeks." *Cable News Network*, March 31, 2004. <http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0403/31/ltn.03.html>.
- Amnesty International. "Iraq - State Cruelty: Branding, Amputation and the Death Penalty," 1996.
- "Anti-War Rally Makes Its Mark." *BBC News*, February 19, 2003. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/2767761.stm.
- "Arab States Line Up Behind Iraq." *BBC News*. March 25, 2003.
- Arango, Tim. "Car Bombings in Baghdad Follow a Familiar Pattern." *International New York Times*. September 3, 2013. http://www.nytimes.com/2013/09/04/world/middleeast/car-bomb-epidemic-is-the-new-normal-in-iraq.html?_r=0.
- Arms Control Association. "Presidential Election Forum: The Candidates on Arms Control." *Arms Control Today*, September 1, 2000. https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2000_09/pressept00.

- Associated Press. "Iraq Considering UN Inspectors." *Global Policy Forum*, May 16, 2002.
<https://www.globalpolicy.org/component/content/article/168/37784.html>.
- . "Russia, China Cool on Iraq Sanctions." *Global Policy Forum*, May 18, 2001.
<https://www.globalpolicy.org/component/content/article/170/42314.html>.
- Azubuikwe, Samuel. "The 'Poodle Theory' and the Anglo-American 'Special Relationship.'" *International Studies* 42, no. 2 (2005): 123–39.
- Bairwell Ltd. "Iraq — Case for War Not Established — Rejected — 18 Mar 2003 at 21:15." *The Public Whip*. Accessed November 2, 2016.
<http://www.publicwhip.org.uk/division.php?date=2003-03-18&number=117&showall=yes#voters>.
- Bardach, Eugene. *A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis: The Eight-Fold Path to More Effective Problem Solving*. London: CQ Press, SAGE, 2012.
- Bearpark, Andy. "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 6 July 2010." 2010.
- Blair, Tony. *A Journey*. London: Hutchinson, 2010.
- . "Doctrine of the International Community." *Chicago Economic Club*. April 22, 1999.
<http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/international-jan-june99-blair-doctrine4-23/>.
- . "Letter to Jonathan Powell: 'Iraq.'" *Office of the Prime Minister*, March 17, 2002.
- . "Speech at the George Bush Senior Presidential Library." *George Bush Senior Presidential Library*. April 8, 2002.
<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2002/apr/08/foreignpolicy.iraq>.
- . "Speech to the House of Commons." *House of Commons*, February 24, 1998.
<http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1998/feb/24/iraq-1>.
- . "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 21 January 2011." 2011.
- . "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 29 January 2010." 2010.
- . "The Case for War: Speech to the House of Commons." *House of Commons*, March 18, 2003. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pg9aEV9bcxs>.
- . "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry," January 14, 2011.

"Blair Makes Troops Pledge to Iraq." *BBC News*. 2005.
http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/4314308.stm.

"Blair 'Ready to Back Regime Change in 2002' - Adviser." *BBC News*. November 30, 2009.
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8386645.stm>.

"Blair Wins War Backing Amid Revolt." *BBC News*. March 19, 2003.
http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/politics/2862325.stm.

Blix, Hans. "An Update on Inspection," 2003. <http://www.un.org/depts/unmovic/Bx27.htm>.

Bluth, Christoph. "'Iraq: Blair's Mission Impossible': A Rejoinder to Paul Hoggett." *British Journal of Politics & International Relations* 7, no. 4 (2005): 598–602.

———. "The British Road to War: Blair, Bush and the Decision to Invade Iraq." *International Affairs* 80, no. 5 (2004).

Boateng, Paul. "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 14 July 2010." 2010.

Bone, James. "'Clean' Iraq Will Admit Weapons Inspectors." *The Times*. November 14, 2002.
<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/news/world/article1985823.ece>.

Bowen, Desmond. "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 7 December 2009." 2009.

Boyce, Michael. "Letter to General Richard B. Myers, United States Air Force." *Ministry of Defence*, July 4, 2002.

———. "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 27 January 2011." 2011.

———. "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry," January 7, 2011.

Brewer, Nicola. "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry," September 12, 2010.

British Armed Forces. "102 Logistics Brigade." Accessed January 5, 2016.
<http://www.army.mod.uk/structure/29318.aspx>.

Brown, Gordon. "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 5 March 2010." 2010.

Brummell, David. "Iraq: Legal Basis for Use of Force - Note of Discussion with Attorney General." *Attorney General's Office*, March 13, 2003.

———. "Letter to Martin Hemming: 'Iraq - Position of the CDS.'" *Attorney General's Office*, March 14, 2003.

- . "Letter to Matthew Rycroft: 'Iraq.'" *Attorney General's Office*, March 14, 2003.
- . "Letter to Tom McKane: 'Iraq: No Fly Zones (NFZs).'" *Attorney General's Office*, February 12, 2001.
- . "Note: 'Iraq: Note of Meeting at No. 10 Downing Street - 4.00 P.m., 19 December 2002.'" *Attorney General's Office*, December 19, 2002.
- . "Note: 'Iraq: Note of Telephone Conversation Between the Foreign Secretary and the Attorney General on Tuesday, 12 November 2002.'" *Attorney General's Office*, November 12, 2002.
- . "Note: 'Iraq: Note of the Telephone Conversation Between the Attorney General and Jonathan Powell - Monday, 11th November 2002.'" *Attorney General's Office*, November 11, 2002.
- Buck, John. "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry," 2010.
- Bueno de Mesquita, Bruce, and David Lalman. "Domestic And International Imperatives In The Specification Of Foreign Policy Objectives". In *Agenda Formation*, 127-150. William H. Riker. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1993.
- Burridge, Brian, and Robin Brims. "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009." 2009.
- Bush, George W. "Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the State of the Union." January 29, 2002. <https://www.c-span.org/video/?168239-1/2002-state-union-address>.
- . "President Bush Outlines Iraqi Threat: Remarks by the President on Iraq." *Cincinnati Museum Center*. October 7, 2002.
- . "Speech to the UN General Assembly." *UN General Assembly*. September 12, 2002. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2002/sep/12/iraq.usa3>.
- . "Speech to the UN General Assembly." September 23, 2003. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/3132984.stm>.
- . "Victory Speech over Iraq." 2003. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/2994345.stm>.

- Butler, Robin, John Chilcot, Peter Inge, Michael Mates, and Ann Taylor. "Review of Intelligence on Weapons of Mass Destruction." London, 2004.
http://news.bbc.co.uk/nol/shared/bsp/hi/pdfs/14_07_04_butler.pdf.
- "Cabinet 'No Place for Attorney.'" *BBC News*. March 24, 2007.
http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/politics/6490597.stm.
- Cabinet Office. "About Us." Accessed July 6, 2015.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/cabinet-office/about>.
- . "The Cabinet Committees System and List of Cabinet Committees," 2010.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-cabinet-committees-system-and-list-of-cabinet-committees>.
- Cable News Network. "US-British 'Smart Sanctions.'" *Global Policy Forum*, November 2, 2001.
<https://www.globalpolicy.org/component/content/article/170/42317.html>.
- Cameron, David. Hansard Parliamentary Debates: 2 December 2015, Column 339 (2015).
- Campbell, Alastair. "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 12 January 2010." 2010.
- Carroll, Lewis. *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, 1866.
[https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Alice%27s_Adventures_in_Wonderland_\(1866\)/Chapter_9](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Alice%27s_Adventures_in_Wonderland_(1866)/Chapter_9).
- Chakrabarti, Suma. "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009." 2009.
- Chandler, David. "Rhetoric Without Responsibility: The Attraction of 'Ethical' Foreign Policy." *British Journal of Politics & International Relations* 5, no. 3 (2003): 295–316.
- Chaplin, Edward. "Note: 'Iraq: Military Action.'" *Foreign and Commonwealth Office*, July 12, 2002.
- . "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 7 December 2009." 2009.
- Chaplin, Edward, and Peter Ricketts. "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 1 December 2009." 2009.
- Chilcot, John. "Letter to Gus O'Donnell: 'Declassification.'" *Iraq Inquiry Secretariat*, December 10, 2010.
- . "Letter to Gus O'Donnell: 'Declassification.'" *Iraq Inquiry Secretariat*, December 22, 2010.

- . "Letter to Gus O'Donnell: 'Declassification.'" *Iraq Inquiry Secretariat*, January 6, 2011.
- . "Letter to Jeremy Heywood." *Iraq Inquiry Secretariat*, May 28, 2014.
- . "Letter to the Prime Minister: 'Iraq Inquiry: Progress.'" *Iraq Inquiry Secretariat*, January 20, 2015.
- Chilcott, Dominick. "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009." 2009.
- Chin, Warren. "British Defense Policy and the War in Iraq 2003-2009." *Defence & Security Analysis* 27, no. 1 (2011): 65-76.
- . "Examining the Application of British Counterinsurgency Doctrine by the American Army in Iraq." *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 18, no. 1 (2007): 1-26.
- . "The United Kingdom and the War on Terror: The Breakdown of National and Military Strategy." *Contemporary Security Policy* 30, no. 1 (2009): 125-46.
- . "Why Did It All Go Wrong? Reassessing British Counterinsurgency In Iraq." *Strategic Studies Quarterly* 2, no. 4 (2008): 119-35.
- Chomsky, Noam. "The Gulf Crisis." *Z Magazine*. Woods Hole, February 1991. https://chomsky.info/199102_02/.
- CNN Library. "Gulf War Fast Facts." *Cable News Network*. September 15, 2013. <http://edition.cnn.com/2013/09/15/world/meast/gulf-war-fast-facts/>.
- "CNN Live Today: New Details Emerging From Early in the White House About Plans to Attack Iraq." *Cable News Network*, March 31, 2004. <http://edition.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0403/31/lt.01.html>.
- Coalition Provisional Authority. *Coalition Provisional Authority Order Number 1: De-Ba'athification Of Iraqi Society*, 2003.
- . *Coalition Provisional Authority Regulation Number 1*, 2003. http://govinfo.library.unt.edu/cpa-iraq/regulations/20030516_CPAREG_1_The_Coalition_Provisional_Authority_.pdf.
- Coates, David, Joel Krieger, and Rhiannon Vickers. *Blair's War*. Cambridge (UK): Polity, 2004.
- Congress (105th). "Iraq Liberation Act." *H.R.* 4655, 1998. <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/105/hr4655>.

- Cook, Robin. "Resignation Speech." *House of Commons*. March 17, 2003. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I0f8NBImwwE>.
- Cordesman, Anthony H. *The Iraq War: Strategy, Tactics, and Military Lessons*. Washington D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2003.
- Cornish, Paul, and Andrew Dorman. "Blair's Wars and Brown's Budgets: From Strategic Defence Review to Strategic Decay in Less than a Decade." *International Affairs* 85, no. 2 (2009): 247–61.
- . "Breaking the Mould: The United Kingdom Strategic Defence Review 2010." *International Affairs* 86, no. 2 (2010): 395–410.
- Cramer, Jane K., and Edward C. Duggan. "In Pursuit of Primacy: Why the United States Invaded Iraq." In *Why Did the United States Invade Iraq?*, 201–43. Abingdon: Routledge, 2012.
- Cramer, Jane K., and A. Trevor Thrall. *Why Did the United States Invade Iraq?* Abingdon: Routledge, 2012.
- Cross, Tim. "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 7 December 2009." 2009.
- . "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry: 'Post-Invasion Iraq: The Planning and the Reality After the Invasion From Mid-2002 to the End of August 2003,'" December 6, 2009.
- Crossette, Barbara. "US-British Plan Seeks to Restore." *New York Times*. May 17, 2001. <https://www.globalpolicy.org/component/content/article/170/42313.html>.
- Daddow, Oliver. "'Tony's War'? Blair, Kosovo and the Interventionist Impulse in British Foreign Policy." *International Affairs* 85, no. 3 (2009): 547–60.
- Danchev, Alex. "Tony Blair's Vietnam: The Iraq War and the 'Special Relationship' in Historical Perspective." *Review of International Studies* 33, no. 2 (2007): 189–203.
- Danilovic, Vesna. "The Rational-Cognitive Debate And Poliheuristic Theory". In *Integrating Cognitive And Rational Theories Of Foreign Policy Decision Making*, 2003.
- Davids, W.J.M., M.G.W. den Boer, C. Fasseur, T Koopmans, N.J. Schrijver, M.J. Schwegman, and A.P. van Walsum. "Rapport Commissie van Onderzoek Besluitvorming Irak." Amsterdam, 2010.

<https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/rapporten/2010/01/12/rapport-commissie-davids>.

Davis, Paul K. "Military Transformation? Which Transformation, and What Lies Ahead?" In *The George W. Bush Defense Program: Policy, Strategy, and War*, edited by Stephen J. Cimbala. Dulles: Potomac Books, 2010.
https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/reprints/2010/RAND_RP1413.pdf.

"Deal Reached on Release of 'Gist' of Blair-Bush Iraq Talks." *BBC News*. May 29, 2014.
<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-27625117>.

Democratic Principles Work Group. *Final Report On The Transition To Democracy In Iraq*, 2002.

Department for International Development. "About Us." Accessed November 3, 2016.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-international-development/about#international-development-acts>.

———. "Department for International Development," 2003.
<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20031201015710/dfid.gov.uk/>.

"Diplomatic Cable: 'The Prime Minister's Meeting with President Bush, 5-7 April.'" *Foreign and Commonwealth Office*, April 10, 2002.

Dodds, John. "Iraq - the Aftermath - Military Options." *Defence, Diplomacy and Intelligence Team (HM Treasury)*, March 4, 2003.

Dodge, Toby. "US Intervention And Possible Iraqi Futures". *Survival* 45, no. 3 (2003): 103-122. doi:10.1093/survival/45.3.103.

———. "The Ideological Roots Of Failure: The Application Of Kinetic Neo-Liberalism To Iraq". *International Affairs* 86, no. 6 (2010): 1269-1286.

Dowse, Tim, and William Ehrman. "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 25 November 2009." 2009.

Dunne, Tim. "'When the Shooting Starts': Atlanticism in British Security Strategy." *International Affairs* 80, no. 5 (2004): 893-909.

Dyson, Stephen Benedict. "Personality And Foreign Policy: Tony Blair's Iraq Decisions". *Foreign Policy Analysis* 2, no. 3 (2006): 289-306.

"Elements of 'Civil War' in Iraq." *BBC News*, February 2, 2007.
http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/6324767.stm.

Elliott, Christopher L. *High Command: British Military Leadership in the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars*. London: C. Hurst & Co, 2015.

Elsschot, Willem. *Verzameld Werk*. Amsterdam: Querido, 1976.

Farouk-Sluglett, Marion, and Peter Sluglett. *Iraq since 1958: From Revolution to Dictatorship*. 2nd ed. London: I.B. Tauris, 2001.

Feith, Douglas J. *War And Decision*. HarperCollins e-books, 2014.

Fisher, Roger, William Ury, and Bruce Patton. *Getting To Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In*. 2nd ed. London: Penguin, 2011.

"Foreign & Commonwealth Office." *Gov.uk*. Accessed December 8, 2015.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/foreign-commonwealth-office>.

Foreign and Commonwealth Office. "Background Paper Submitted to the Iraq Inquiry: 'UN Security Council Resolutions on Iraq, 1990-2001,'" November 2009.

Försvarsmaktens (Swedish Armed Forces). "Fältsjukhusinsatsen I Kuwait." Accessed October 26, 2016. <http://www.forsvarsmakten.se/sv/information-och-fakta/var-historia/internationella-insatser/avslutade-truppinsatser/kuwait/>.

Friedman, Thomas L. "How U.S. Won Support to Use Mideast Forces The Iraq Resolution: A U.S.-Soviet Collaboration -- A Special Report." *The New York Times*. December 2, 1990.
<http://www.nytimes.com/1990/12/02/world/mideast-tensions-us-won-support-use-mideast-forces-iraq-resolution-us-soviet.html?src=pm&pagewanted=1>.

Goertz, Gary. "Constraints, Compromises, And Decision Making". *Journal Of Conflict Resolution* 48, no. 1 (2004): 14-37.

Goldsmith, Peter. "Letter to Geoffrey Hoon." *Attorney General's Office*, March 28, 2002.

———. "Letter to the Foreign Secretary." *Attorney General's Office*, February 3, 2003.

———. "Letter to the Prime Minister: 'Iraq.'" *Attorney General's Office*, July 30, 2002.

———. "Letter to the Prime Minister: 'Iraq.'" *Attorney General's Office*, January 30, 2003.

———. "Note: 'Draft: 12 February 2003.'" *Attorney General's Office*, February 12, 2003.

- . "Note: 'Draft - Iraq: Interpretation of Resolution 1441.'" *Attorney General's Office*, January 14, 2003.
- . "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 27 January 2010." 2010.
- Goult, Alan. "Letter to Tom McKane: 'Iraq.'" *Foreign and Commonwealth Office*, October 20, 2000.
- Grainger, John. "Letter: 'Iraq, Regime Change.'" *Foreign and Commonwealth Office*, March 21, 2002.
- . "Letter to Mr Pattison: 'Rights Under International Law to Occupy and Administer Iraq After a Conflict.'" *Foreign and Commonwealth Office*, January 31, 2003.
- Greenstock, Jeremy. "Letter to Michael Jay: 'Iraq: Handling in the Security Council.'" *United Kingdom Mission to the United Nations*, September 3, 2002.
- . "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 15 December 2009." 2009.
- . "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 27 November 2009." 2009. www.iraqinquiry.org.uk.
- . "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry: 'Developments at the UN,'" November 2009.
- Guo, Rongxing. *Territorial Disputes and Conflict Management*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2012.
- Haddon, Catherine. "Parliament, the Royal Prerogative and Decisions to Go to War." *Institute for Government*, 2013.
<http://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/blog/6589/parliament-the-royal-prerogative-and-decisions-to-go-to-war/>.
- Hall, Sarah, Suzanne Goldenberg, and John Hooper. "Palestinian Joy - Global Condemnation." *The Guardian*. September 12, 2001.
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2001/sep/12/september11.usa16>.
- Hashim, Ahmed. *Insurgency and Counter-Insurgency in Iraq*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006.
- Haynes, Stephen F. "Case Closed." *The Weekly Standard*. November 24, 2003.
<http://www.weeklystandard.com/article/4618>.
- Hemming, Martin J. "Letter to David Brummell: 'Iraq: Position of the CDS.'" *Ministry of Defence*, March 12, 2003.

- Herek, Gregory M., Irving L. Janis, and Paul Huth. "Decision Making During International Crises". *Journal Of Conflict Resolution* 31, no. 2 (1987): 203-226.
- Herring, E., and P. Robinson. "Deception and Britain's Road to War in Iraq." *International Journal of Contemporary Iraqi Studies* 8, no. 2-3 (2014): 213-32.
- Herring, Eric. "Between Iraq and a Hard Place: A Critique of the British Government's Case of UN Economic Sanctions." *Review of International Studies* 28 (2002): 39-56.
- Hinsliff, Gaby. "Bush Admits He Offered Blair Way Out of the Iraq Conflict." *The Guardian*. April 23, 2006. <http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2006/apr/23/uk.iraq>.
- "History: Past Foreign Secretaries." *Gov.uk*. Accessed December 8, 2015. <https://www.gov.uk/government/history/past-foreign-secretaries>.
- Hoge, Warren. "Blaming France, Blair Says Passage of Iraq Resolution Unlikely." *The New York Times*. March 13, 2003. <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/03/13/international/europe/blaming-france-blair-says-passage-of-iraq-resolution.html>.
- Hoggett, Paul. "Iraq: Blair's Mission Impossible." *British Journal of Politics & International Relations* 7, no. 3 (2005): 418-28.
- Holmes, John. "Diplomatic Cable." *United Kingdom Mission to Paris*, March 13, 2003.
- Hoon, Geoffrey. "Letter to the Attorney General." *Ministry of Defence*, April 14, 2002.
- . "Letter to the Prime Minister: 'Iraq.'" *Ministry of Defence*, March 22, 2002.
- . "Letter to the Prime Minister: 'Iraq: UK Military Options.'" *Ministry of Defence*, October 15, 2002.
- . "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 19 January 2010." 2010.
- "House of Commons Debates: Monday, 17 March 2003," 2003. <https://www.theyworkforyou.com/debates/?d=2003-03-17>.
- "House of Commons Debates: Tuesday, 18 March 2003," 2003. <https://www.theyworkforyou.com/debates/?d=2003-03-18>.
- Human Rights Watch. "Off Target: The Conduct of the War and Civilian Casualties in Iraq," 2003. <https://www.hrw.org/reports/2003/usa1203/usa1203.pdf>.

Ingram, Adam. "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 16 July 2010." 2010.

International Committee of the Red Cross. "Occupation and International Humanitarian Law: Questions and Answers," 2004.
<https://www.icrc.org/eng/resources/documents/misc/634kfc.htm>.

"Iraq: Iraq Rejects United Nations Security Council Move Toward Ending Sanctions Stalemate." *Foreign Policy Bulletin* 11, no. 1-2 (2000): 213-24.

"Iraq: Options Paper." *Overseas and Defence Secretariat (Cabinet Office)*, March 8, 2002.
<http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB328/II-Doc01.pdf>.

"Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction: The Assessment of the British Government." London, 2002. <https://fas.org/nuke/guide/iraq/iraqdossier.pdf>.

"Iraq Inquiry 'Disappointed' by Bush-Blair Note Secrecy." *BBC News*. January 18, 2011.
<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-12210687>.

"Jack Straw (British Politician)." *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Accessed November 2, 2016.
<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Jack-Straw>.

Jackson, Mike. "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 28 July 2010." 2010.

Jay, Michael. "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 30 June 2010." 2010.

Jervis, Robert. *Why Intelligence Fails*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010.

Jervis, Robert, Richard Ned Lebow, and Janice Gross Stein. *Psychology And Deterrence*. Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985.

"Joint Statement by China, France and Russia Interpreting UN Security Council Resolution 1441 (2002)," November 8, 2002.
<http://www.staff.city.ac.uk/p.willetts/IRAQ/FRRSCHST.HTM>.

Kafala, Tarik. "How Smart Are Smart Sanctions?" *BBC News*. March 8, 2001.
http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/1207742.stm.

Kampfner, John. *Blair's Wars*. London: Free Press, 2003.

Keeble, Sally. "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 5 July 2010." 2010.

———. "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry," July 2010.

- Kennedy-Pipe, Caroline, and Rhiannon Vickers. "'Blowback' for Britain? Blair, Bush, and the War in Iraq." *Review of International Studies* 33, no. 2 (2007): 205–21.
- Kernaghan, Paul. "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 23 July 2010." 2010.
- . "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry," June 9, 2010.
- Kettell, Steven. "The Curious Incident of the Dog That Didn't Bark in the Night-Time: Structure and Agency in Britain's War with Iraq." *Politics and Policy* 37, no. 2 (2009): 415–39.
- Klare, Michael T. "Blood for Oil, in Iraq and Elsewhere." In *Why Did the United States Invade Iraq?*, edited by Jane K Cramer and A. Trevor Thrall, 129–44. Abingdon: Routledge, 2012.
- Langellier, Jean-Pierre. "Les Mille Et Un Crimes De Saddam Hussein." *Le Monde*. September 28, 2002. http://www.lemonde.fr/international/article/2002/09/28/les-mille-et-un-crimes-de-saddam-hussein_292273_3210.html.
- "Last British Forces Withdraw from Iraq." *Al Jazeera*, May 23, 2011. <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2011/05/20115221285472670.html>.
- Lehrer, Jim, Al Gore, and George W. Bush. "The Second Gore-Bush Presidential Debate." *Commission on Presidential Debates*. September 11, 2000. <http://www.debates.org/index.php?page=october-11-2000-debate-transcript>.
- "Letter from Richard Dearlove's Private Secretary to Sir David Manning: Iraq." *Secret Intelligence Service*, December 3, 2001.
- "Letter to Simon McDonald." *Office of the Prime Minister*, May 18, 2002.
- "Letter to Simon Webb." *Foreign and Commonwealth Office*, May 3, 2002.
- Lind, Michael. "Neoconservatism and American Hegemony." In *Why Did the United States Invade Iraq?*, edited by Jane K. Kramer and A. Trevor Thrall, 114–28. Abingdon: Routledge, 2012.
- London School of Economics. "Jonathan Powell," 2010. <http://www.lse.ac.uk/IDEAS/people/bios/powellJonathan.aspx>.
- MacAskill, Ewen. "UN Agrees Long-Awaited Smart Sanctions for Iraq." *The Guardian*. May 15, 2002. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2002/may/15/iraq.unitednations>.

- Macleod, Iain. "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry," June 24, 2010.
- Macpherson, Nicholas. "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry: HM Treasury Involvement in Iraq," January 15, 2010.
- Mann, Bruce, Tom McKane, and Trevor Woolley. "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 July 2010." 2010.
- Manning, David. "Letter to the Prime Minister: 'Your Trip to the US.'" *Office of the Prime Minister*, March 14, 2002.
- . "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 30 November 2009." 2009.
- Manningham-Buller, Elizabeth. "Letter to John Gieve: 'Iraq: Possible Terrorist Response to a US Attack.'" *Security Service*, March 22, 2002.
- Marston, Daniel. "Adaptation in the Field: The British Army's Difficult Campaign in Iraq." *Security Challenges* 6, no. 1 (2010): 71–84.
- McCain, John, Jesse Helms, Henry J. Hyde, Richard C. Shelby, Harold Ford Jr., Joseph I. Lieberman, Trent Lott, Benjamin A. Gilman, and Sam Brownback. "Letter Urging Action in Iraq." December 7, 2001. http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/nation/specials/attacked/transcripts/iraqletter_120701.html.
- McCubbins, Mathew D., Roger G. Noll, and Barry R. Weingast. "Administrative Procedures as Instruments of Political Control." *Journal of Law, Economics & Organization* 3, no. 2 (1987): 243–77.
- . "Structure and Process, Politics and Policy: Administrative Arrangements and the Political Control of Agencise." *Virginia Law Review* 75, no. 2 (1989): 431–82.
- McDonald, Simon. "Letter: 'Iraq: Options.'" *Foreign and Commonwealth Office*, December 3, 2001.
- . "Letter to David Manning: 'Iraq: Ultimatum.'" *Foreign and Commonwealth Office*, August 27, 2002.
- . "Letter to Richard Dearlove's Private Secretary: 'Iraq.'" *Foreign and Commonwealth Office*, December 5, 2001.
- . "Letter to the Attorney General." *Foreign and Commonwealth Office*, February 6, 2003.
- . "Note: 'Attorney General.'" *Foreign and Commonwealth Office*, September 24, 2002.

———. “Note to Legal Adviser: ‘Iraq.’” *Foreign and Commonwealth Office*, October 15, 2002.

McFadden, Robert. “From New York to Melbourne, Protest Against War on Iraq.” *The New York Times*. 2003.
<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/02/16/international/16RALL.html?pagewanted=all>.

McHugh, Kelly. “Bush, Blair, and the War in Iraq: Alliance Politics and the Limits of Influence.” *Political Science Quarterly* 125, no. 3 (2010): 465–91.

McKane, Tom. “April Letter to John Sawers: ‘Iraq.’” *Cabinet Office*, April 6, 2001.

———. “February Letter to John Sawers: ‘Iraq.’” *Cabinet Office*, February 15, 2001.

———. “Letter to David Manning: ‘Iraq Stocktake.’” *Cabinet Office*, September 18, 2001.

———. “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 19 January 2011.” 2011.

Mearsheimer, John J., and Stephen M. Walt. “The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy.” *Middle East Policy* 13, no. 3 (2006): 29–87.

Meyer, Christopher. “Iraq and Afghanistan: Conversation with Wolfowitz.” *British Embassy in Washington*, March 18, 2002.

———. “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 26 November 2009.” 2009.

“Military - Gulf War Coalition Forces: Countries Compared.” *NationMaster*. Accessed October 30, 2016. <http://www.nationmaster.com/country-info/stats/Military/Gulf-War-Coalition-Forces>.

Miller, Carolyn. “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 21 July 2010.” 2010.

Ministry of Defence. “1990/1991 Gulf Conflict.” Accessed October 26, 2016.
<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20121026065214/http://www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/AboutDefence/WhatWeDo/HealthandSafety/GulfVeteransIllnesses/19901991GulfConflict.htm>.

———. “Background Paper Submitted to the Iraq Inquiry: ‘Iraq: No Fly Zones,’” November 6, 2009.

———. “Operation Fingal.” *The National Archives*, 2010.
<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.operations.mod.uk/fingal/index.htm>.

- . "Operation Telic - British Forces." *The National Archives*, 2005. http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20060206092411/http://www.operations.mod.uk/telic/forces_archive.htm.
- . "Operation Veritas." *The National Archives*, 2010. <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.operations.mod.uk/veritas/index.htm>.
- . "Summary Reports: March and April 2003." *The National Archives*, 2010. <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.operations.mod.uk/telic/summaryarchive1.htm>.
- . "Summary Reports: May to December 2003." *The National Archives*, 2010. <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.operations.mod.uk/telic/summaryarchive2.htm>.
- Mintz, Alex. "The Decision To Attack Iraq: A Noncompensatory Theory Of Decision Making". *Journal Of Conflict Resolution* 37, no. 4 (1993): 595-618.
- . *Integrating Cognitive And Rational Theories Of Foreign Policy Decision Making*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002.
- . "How Do Leaders Make Decisions?". *Journal Of Conflict Resolution* 48, no. 1 (2004): 3-13. doi:10.1177/0022002703261056.
- . "Applied Decision Analysis: Utilizing Poliheuristic Theory To Explain And Predict Foreign Policy And National Security Decisions". *International Studies Perspectives* 6, no. 1 (2005): 94-98. doi:10.1111/j.1528-3577.2005.00195.x.
- Mitchell, David, and Tansa George Massoud. "Anatomy of Failure: Bush's Decision-Making Process and the Iraq War." *Foreign Policy Analysis* 5, no. 3 (2009): 265-85.
- Munroe, Randall. "1000 Times." *XKCD*. Accessed June 4, 2015. <http://xkcd.com/558/>.
- Murray, Williamson, and Robert H. Scales Jr. *The Iraq War: A Military History*. London: Belknap Press, 2003.
- National Audit Office. "Ministry of Defence: Operation TELIC – United Kingdom Military Operations in Iraq." London, 2003.

Negroponte, John D. "United States Explanation of Vote on UN Security Council Resolution 1441 (2002)." November 8, 2002.
<http://www.staff.city.ac.uk/p.willetts/IRAQ/US081102.HTM>.

Norton, Philip. "The Presidentialization of British Politics." *Government and Opposition* 38, no. 2 (2003): 274–78.

"Note: 'Briefing to Prime Minister.'" *Ministry of Defence*, January 15, 2003.

"Note: 'David Manning's Visit to Washington 17 May - Iraq.'" *Ministry of Defence*, May 21, 2002.

"Note: 'Record of the Meeting Between the Prime Minister and Chiefs of Staff to Discuss OP TELIC: 15 Jan 03.'" *Ministry of Defence*, January 22, 2003.

"Note to Chiefs of Staff on UK Participation in Operational Plan (Extract from MO 6/17/15C IRAQ)." *Ministry of Defence*, January 28, 2003.

O'Donnell, Gus. "Letter to John Chilcot." *Cabinet Office*, January 11, 2011.

———. "Letter to John Chilcot: 'Declassification.'" *Cabinet Office*, December 22, 2010.

———. "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 28 January 2011." 2011.

O'Malley, Eoin. "Setting Choices, Controlling Outcomes: The Operation of Prime Ministerial Influence and The UK's Decision to Invade Iraq." *British Journal of Politics & International Relations* 9 (2007): 1–9.

Office of the Press Secretary, White House. *Statement On Signing The Iraq Liberation Act Of 1998*, 1998. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=55205>.

Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy. *Iraqi Interim Authority Action Plan*, 2003.

Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, *Iraqi Interim Authority (IIA) Implementation Plan*, 2003.

Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy. *Iraqi Interim Authority Structure And Implementation*, 2003.

Parmar, Inderjeet. "'I'm Proud of the British Empire': Why Tony Blair Backs George W. Bush." *The Political Quarterly* 76, no. 2 (2005): 218–31.

Pattison, Stephen. "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 31 January 2011 (Morning Session)." 2011.

———. “Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry,” January 2011.

Pattison, Stephen, and John Buck. “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 31 January 2011 (Afternoon Session).” n.d.

Patton, Carl V, David S Sawicki, and Jennifer J Clark. *Basic Methods Of Policy Analysis And Planning*. 3rd ed. Abingdon: Routledge, 2016.

Phillips, David L. *Losing Iraq: Inside the Postwar Reconstruction Fiasco*. New York: Basic Books, 2009.

Pigott, Anthony. “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 4 December 2009.” 2009.

Pike, John. “US Forces Order of Battle - 17 March.” *GlobalSecurity.org*, n.d.

Plett, Barbara. “Iraq: Second UN Official Resigns.” *BBC News*. February 15, 2000. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/644057.stm.

Poivre D’Arvor, Patrick, David Pujadas, and Jacques Chirac. “Interview Télévisée Du Président de La République Sur TF1 et France 2.” *TF1*. March 10, 2003. http://www.jacqueschirac-asso.fr/archives-elysee.fr/elysee/elysee.fr/francais/interventions/interviews_articles_de_presse_et_interventions_televisees/2003/mars/fi001798.html.

“Pope Condemns Any War on Iraq.” *Cable News Network*. January 13, 2003. <http://edition.cnn.com/2003/WORLD/europe/01/13/sproject.irq.pope/index.html>.

“Pope Warns Against Iraq War.” *BBC News*. December 25, 2002. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/2605367.stm>.

Porter, Patrick. “Last Charge of the Knights? Iraq, Afghanistan and the Special Relationship.” *International Affairs* 86, no. 2 (2010): 353–75.

———. “Lest We Forget: Britain’s Iraq Inquiry, and Why It Matters.” *International Politics* 53, no. 6 (2016): 683–88.

Powell, Jonathan. “Letter to the Prime Minister: ‘Iraq.’” *Office of the Prime Minister*, July 19, 2002.

———. “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 18 January 2010.” 2010.

Prescott, John. “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 30 July 2010.” 2010.

- Preston, Julia, and Todd S. Purdum. "U.N. Inspectors Can Return Unconditionally, Iraq Says." *The New York Times*. September 16, 2002. <http://www.nytimes.com/2002/09/16/international/un-inspectors-can-return-unconditionally-iraq-says.html>.
- Program on Negotiation at Harvard Law School. "About the Harvard Negotiation Project," 2009. http://www.pon.harvard.edu/research_projects/harvard-negotiation-project/hnp/.
- Project for the New American Century. "Open Letter to the President," February 19, 1998. <http://www.iraqwatch.org/perspectives/rumsfeld-openletter.htm>.
- Pronk, Raymond Thomas. "Obama's Red Lines - Videos," 2013. <https://raymondpronk.wordpress.com/2013/09/04/obamas-red-lines-videos/>.
- R.N. "Note: 'CDS Discussion with CJCS General Myers - 3 Jul 02.'" *Ministry of Defence*, July 3, 2002.
- Ralph, Jason. "After Chilcot: The 'Doctrine of the International Community' and the UK Decision to Invade Iraq." *British Journal of Politics & International Relations* 13 (2011): 304–25.
- Rangwala, Glen. "Counter-Insurgency amid Fragmentation: The British in Southern Iraq." *Journal of Strategic Studies* 32, no. 3 (2009): 495–513.
- Rayment, Sean. "1,000 British Troops to Spearhead Security Role." *The Telegraph*. December 16, 2001.
- . "30,000 Soldiers on Alert to Step in for Striking Firemen." *The Telegraph*. August 4, 2002. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1403508/30000-soldiers-on-alert-to-step-in-for-striking-firemen.html>.
- "Reaction From Around the World." *The New York Times*. September 12, 2001. <http://www.nytimes.com/2001/09/12/us/reaction-from-around-the-world.html>.
- Record, Jeffrey. "Back to the Weinberger-Powell Doctrine?" *Strategic Studies Quarterly* 1 (Fall) (2007): 79–95.
- Redd, Steven B. "The Polyheuristic Theory Of Foreign Policy Decision Making: Experimental Evidence". In *Integrating Cognitive And Rational Theories Of Foreign Policy Decision Making*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002.

Reith, John. "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 15 January 2010." 2010.

Rentoul, John. *Tony Blair*. London: Warner, 2001.

Reuters. "UN Council Powers Discuss Easing." *Global Policy Forum*, May 22, 2001.
<https://www.globalpolicy.org/component/content/article/170/42316.html>.

Reynolds, Nicholas E. *Basrah, Baghdad, and Beyond*. Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 2005.

Ricketts, Peter. "Note: 'Iraq: Resolutions: The 'Kosovo Option.'" *Foreign and Commonwealth Office*, October 3, 2002.

Ricks, Thomas E. *Fiasco*. New York: Penguin, 2006.

Ross, Carne. "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry," July 12, 2010.

Rossiter, Mike. *Target Basra. The High-Octane Story of the Royal Marine Commandos in Iraq*. London: Bantam, 2008.

Rumsfeld, Donald. "Beyond Nation Building". Speech, Intrepid Sea-Air-Space Museum, New York, 2003.

———. "Letter to Condoleezza Rice: 'Iraq.'" July 27, 2001.

Russert, Tim. "Interview with Dick Cheney." *Meet The Press*. September 14, 2003.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Km1SL1i-pWI>.

Rycroft, Matthew. "Email to Jonathan Powell et alii: 'French Veto - Urgent.'" *Office of the Prime Minister*, March 12, 2003.

———. "Letter to David Brummell: 'Iraq.'" *Office of the Prime Minister*, March 15, 2003.

———. "Letter to Peter Watkins." *Office of the Prime Minister*, January 15, 2003.

———. "Letter to Simon McDonald: 'Iraq: Legal and Military Aspects.'" *Office of the Prime Minister*, March 11, 2003.

Sawers, John. "Letter to Sherard Cowper-Coles: 'Iraq: New Policy Framework.'" *Office of the Prime Minister*, March 7, 2001.

———. "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 10 December 2009." 2009.

Scarlett, John. "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 December 2009." 2009.

- Schelling, Thomas C. *The Strategy of Conflict*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1963.
- Sciolino, Elaine. "Threats and Responses: Discord; France to Veto Resolution on Iraq War, Chirac Says." *The New York Times*. March 11, 2003. <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/03/11/world/threats-and-responses-discord-france-to-veto-resolution-on-iraq-war-chirac-says.html>.
- Sedwill, Mark. "Letter to John Sawers: 'Iraq: Policy Review.'" *Foreign and Commonwealth Office*, February 20, 2001.
- . "Letter to Matthew Rycroft: 'Iraq: Cabinet Discussion.'" *Foreign and Commonwealth Office*, March 6, 2002.
- . "Note: 'Iraq: Foreign Secretary's Conversation with the Attorney-General, 18 October.'" *Foreign and Commonwealth Office*, October 18, 2002.
- Seldon, Anthony. *Blair*. London: Free Press, 2005.
- Select Committee on Constitution. "Waging War: Parliament's Role and Responsibility." London, 2006. <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200506/ldselect/ldconst/236/23603.htm>.
- Select Committee on Foreign Affairs. "The February Dossier." London, 2003. <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200203/cmselect/cmfa/813/81308.htm>.
- Shakir, Faiz. "Bush Insists 'I Didn't Want War', Overwhelming Evidence Suggests Otherwise." *Thinkprogress*, March 21, 2006. <https://thinkprogress.org/bush-insists-i-didnt-want-war-overwhelming-evidence-suggests-otherwise-ec67e5c9a001#.jgopn9uql>.
- Sharp, Jane M. O. "Tony Blair, Iraq and the Special Relationship: Poodle or Partner?" *International Journal* 59, no. 1 (2003): 59–86.
- Shawcross, William. *Allies: The US, Britain, Europe, and the War in Iraq*. London: Atlantic, 2003.
- Sheinwald, Nigel, John Sawers, and Desmond Bowen. "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 16 December 2009." 2009. www.iraqinquiry.org.uk.
- Shirreff, A.R.D. "Note: 'David Manning's Visit to Washington 17 May - Iraq' (Answer)." *Ministry of Defence*, May 21, 2002.

- Short, Clare. "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 February 2010." 2010.
- Smith, Helena. "Greeks Accuse Blair of War Crimes in Iraq." *The Guardian*. July 29, 2003.
<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2003/jul/29/iraq.iraq>.
- Smith, Michael. "Ministers Were Told Premier Was Seen As Stooge". *The Telegraph*, 2004.
<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/northamerica/usa/1472540/Ministers-were-told-premier-was-seen-as-stooge.html>.
- Sparrow, Andrew, and Frances Perraudin. "Cameron Wins Syria Airstrikes Vote By Majority Of 174 - As It Happened." *The Guardian*. December 3, 2015.
<http://www.theguardian.com/politics/blog/live/2015/dec/02/syria-airstrikes-mps-debate-vote-cameron-action-against-isis-live>.
- Steele, Jonathan. *Defeat*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2009.
- Steinbruner, John D. *The Cybernetic Theory Of Decision: New Dimensions Of Political Analysis*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1974.
- Stephens, Philip. *Tony Blair: The Price of Leadership*. London: Politico's, 2004.
- "Strategic Defence Review," 1998.
http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20121018172816/http://www.mod.uk/NR/rdonlyres/65F3D7AC-4340-4119-93A2-20825848E50E/0/sdr1998_complete.pdf.
- Straw, Jack. "Diplomatic Cable: 'Iraq: Foreign Secretary's Conversation with French Foreign Minister, 13 March.'" *Foreign and Commonwealth Office*, March 13, 2003.
- . "Letter to the Attorney General." *Foreign and Commonwealth Office*, February 20, 2003.
- . "Letter to the Prime Minister: 'Crawford/Iraq.'" *Foreign and Commonwealth Office*, March 5, 2002.
- . "Letter to the Prime Minister: 'Iraq: Contingency Planning.'" *Foreign and Commonwealth Office*, July 8, 2002.
- . "Letter to the Prime Minister: 'Iraq: Pursuing the UN Route.'" *Foreign and Commonwealth Office*, September 14, 2002.
- . "Note to Michael Wood: 'Iraq: Legal Basis for Use of Force.'" *Foreign and Commonwealth Office*, January 29, 2003.

- . "Speech in the House of Commons." *House of Commons*. March 17, 2003.
<http://www.theyworkforyou.com/debates/?id=2003-03-17.703.1>.
- . "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 21 January 2010." 2010.
- . "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 2 February 2011." 2011.
- . "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 8 February 2010." 2010.
- . "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry," January 2010.
- Strong, James. "Why Parliament Now Decides On War: Tracing The Growth Of The Parliamentary Prerogative Through Syria, Libya And Iraq". *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 17, no. 4 (2014): 604-622.
- Syalm, Rajeev, Andrew Alderson, and Catherine Milner. "One Million March Against War." *The Telegraph*. February 16, 2003.
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1422228/One-million-march-against-war.html>.
- Synnott, Hilary. *Bad Days in Basra: My Turbulent Time as Britain's Man in Southern Iraq*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2008.
- Synnott, Hilary, Graeme Lamb, and Andrew Stewart. "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 9 December 2009 (First Session)." 2009.
- Tebbit, Kevin. "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 3 February 2010." 2010.
- Tebbit, Kevin, and Michael Boyce. "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 3 December 2009." 2009.
- "The British Army: Formations." *ArmedForces.co.uk*. Accessed February 4, 2016.
<http://www.armedforces.co.uk/army/listings/l0008.html>.
- "The Persecution of Tony Blair." *The Economist*. London, April 2014.
<http://www.economist.com/news/britain/21601242-hating-war-mongering-former-prime-minister-has-become-dismal-national-sport-persecution>.
- "The Plain Truth." *The New York Times*. June 17, 2004.
- "Timeline: Iraq (Operation TELIC)." *Airborne Assault ParData*. Accessed February 27, 2015.
<https://paradata.org.uk/events/iraq-operation-telic>.

Tisdall, Simon, and David Hirst. "Superpowers Unite on Iraq." *The Guardian*. August 3, 1990.
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/1990/aug/03/iraq.davidhirst>.

Torpy, Glenn. "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 18 January 2011." 2011.

Turnbull, Andrew. "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 13 January 2010." 2010.

"Tutu Calls for Trial of Bush and Blair." *The New York Times*. September 2, 2012.
http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/03/world/europe/tutu-says-bush-and-blair-should-face-court-over-iraq.html?_r=0.

Tyler, Patrick E. "Annan Says Iraq War Was 'Illegal.'" *The New York Times*. September 16, 2004. <http://www.nytimes.com/2004/09/16/international/16CND-NATI.html?fta=y>.

———. "Standoff in the Gulf; U.S. Ready to Fly the Last Captives Out of Baghdad." *The New York Times*. December 11, 1990.
<http://www.nytimes.com/1990/12/11/world/standoff-in-the-gulf-us-ready-to-fly-the-last-captives-out-of-baghdad.html?src=pm&pagewanted=1>.

U.S. Department of State. "Winning the War on Terror," 2003. <http://2001-2009.state.gov/documents/organization/24172.pdf>.

"UK Combat Operations End in Iraq." *BBC News*, April 30, 2009.
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk/8026136.stm>.

UN Press Office. "Le Secrétaire d'Etat Américain, Colin Powell, Présente Des Informations 'Sûres et Fiables' sur Les Tentatives de l'Iraq de Dissimuler Les Armes et Activités Interdites Par La Résolution 1441," February 5, 2003.
<http://www.un.org/press/fr/2003/CS2444.doc.htm>.

———. "Summary of the Security Council Debate on Iraq upon the Adoption of Resolution 1441 (2002)," November 8, 2002.
<http://www.staff.city.ac.uk/p.willetts/IRAQ/PRSC7564.HTM>.

———. "United Nations Weapons Inspectors Report to Security Council on Progress in Disarmament of Iraq." March 7, 2003.
<http://www.un.org/press/en/2003/sc7682.doc.htm>.

UN Security Council. "Security Council Resolution 1194." *S/RES/1194*, 1998.

———. "Security Council Resolution 1205." *S/RES/1205*, 1998.

- . “Security Council Resolution 1284.” *S/RES/1284*, 1999.
- . Security Council Resolution 1368, *S/RES/1368* § (2001).
- . Security Council Resolution 1373, *S/RES/1373* § (2001).
- . Security Council Resolution 1377, *S/RES/1377* § (2001).
- . “Security Council Resolution 1409.” *S/RES/1409*, 2002.
- . “Security Council Resolution 1441.” *S/RES/1441*, 2002.
- . “Security Council Resolution 1483.” *S/RES/1483*, 2003.
- . Security Council Resolution 660, *S/RES/660* § (1990).
- . Security Council Resolution 661, *S/RES/661* § (1990).
- . Security Council Resolution 665, *S/RES/665* § (1990).
- . “Security Council Resolution 678.” *S/RES/678*, 1990.
- . “Security Council Resolution 687.” *S/RES/687*, 1991.
- . “Security Council Resolution 688.” *S/RES/688*, 1991.
- . “Security Council Resolution 986.” *S/RES/986*, 1995.

United Nations. “Voting Record for S/RES/1441.” Accessed October 28, 2016.
<http://unbisnet.un.org:8080/ipac20/ipac.jsp?profile=voting&index=.VM&term=sres1441>.

Viggers, Frederick. “Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry,” December 8, 2009.

Walker, Michael. “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 1 February 2010.” 2010.

“War Draws Condemnation.” *BBC News*. March 20, 2003.
http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/world/middle_east/2867027.stm.

Warren, Aiden. *Prevention, Pre-Emption and the Nuclear Option: From Bush to Obama*. New York: Routledge, 2012.

Watkins, Peter D. “Letter to David Manning: ‘Iraq: Military Planning.’” *Ministry of Defence*, September 6, 2002.

- . “Letter to David Manning: ‘Iraq: UK Military Options.’” *Ministry of Defence*, October 29, 2002.
- . “Letter to Matthew Rycroft: ‘Iraq.’” *Ministry of Defence*, July 26, 2002.
- . “Note: ‘Iraq: Military Planning.’” *Ministry of Defence*, January 16, 2003.
- Webb, Simon. “Letter to Peter Ricketts.” *Ministry of Defence*, May 10, 2002.
- . “Note: ‘Axis of Evil.’” *Ministry of Defence*, February 27, 2002.
- . “Note: ‘Bush and the War on Terrorism.’” *Ministry of Defence*, April 12, 2002.
- Webb, Simon, Peter Ricketts, William Patey, and Michael Wood. “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 24 November 2009.” 2009.
- Wechsberg, Anna. “Letter to Peter Watkins: ‘Iraq: Military Options.’” *Office of the Prime Minister*, October 31, 2002.
- Weisman, Steven R. “Threats and Responses: Security Council; Powell, in U.N. Speech, Presents Case to Show Iraq Has Not Disarmed.” *The New York Times*. February 6, 2003. <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/02/06/world/threats-responses-security-council-powell-un-speech-presents-case-show-iraq-has.html>.
- Whitaker, Raymond. “The Crawford Deal: Did Blair Sign Up for War at Bush’s Texas Ranch in April 2002?” *The Independent*. February 27, 2005. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/the-crawford-deal-did-blair-sign-up-for-war-at-bushs-texas-ranch-in-april-2002-485041.html>.
- White, Michael, and Patrick Wintour. “Blair Calls for World Fight Against Terror.” *The Guardian*. September 12, 2001. <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2001/sep/12/uk.september11>.
- White, Stephen. “Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 21 July 2010.” 2010.
- Whitley, Albert. “Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry,” January 25, 2011.
- Wilby, Peter. “Man Without a Shadow.” *The Guardian*. May 5, 2007. <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2007/may/05/biography.politicalbooks>.
- Williams, M.J. “Letter to David Manning: ‘Iraq: Contingency Actions.’” *Ministry of Defence*, September 12, 2002.

- Williams, Paul. "Who's Making UK Foreign Policy?" *International Affairs* 80, no. 5 (2004): 909–29.
- Wilmshurst, Elizabeth. "Resignation Letter." *Foreign and Commonwealth Office*, March 18, 2003.
- Wilson, David. "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 4 December 2009." 2009.
- Wither, James. "An Endangered Partnership: The Anglo-American Defence Relationship in the Early Twenty-First Century." *European Security* 15, no. 1 (2006): 47–65.
- Wood, Michael. "Letter to Cathy Adams: 'Iraq: Latest Text.'" *Foreign and Commonwealth Office*, October 18, 2002.
- . "Letter to Cathy Adams: 'Iraq: Security Council Resolution 1441 (2002).'" *Foreign and Commonwealth Office*, December 9, 2002.
- . "Note: 'FAC: Iraq: International Law.'" *Foreign and Commonwealth Office*, October 4, 2002.
- . "Note: 'Iraq.'" *Foreign and Commonwealth Office*, March 26, 2002.
- . "Note: 'Iraq.'" *Foreign and Commonwealth Office*, October 15, 2002.
- . "Note: 'Iraq: Legal Basis for the Possible Use of Force.'" *Foreign and Commonwealth Office*, November 6, 2002.
- . "Note: 'Iraq: Legal Basis for Use of Force.'" *Foreign and Commonwealth Office*, January 24, 2003.
- . "Note: 'Iraq: Legal Position.'" *Foreign and Commonwealth Office*, January 22, 2003.
- . "Note: 'Iraq: Legality of Use of Force.'" *Foreign and Commonwealth Office*, August 15, 2002.
- . "Note to Edward Chaplin: 'Iraq: Prime Minister's Phone Call With Bush, 14 October.'" *Foreign and Commonwealth Office*, October 17, 2002.
- . "Testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, 26 January 2010." 2010.
- . "Witness Statement to the Iraq Inquiry," January 15, 2010.
- Woodward, Bob. *Plan of Attack*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004.

———. *State Of Denial*. New York: Simon & Schuster (e-books), 2014.

“World Shock over U.S. Attacks.” *Cable News Network*. September 11, 2001.
<http://edition.cnn.com/2001/WORLD/europe/09/11/trade.centre.reaction/>.

Zeller, Tom. “The Nation; How Americans Link Iraq and Sept. 11.” *The New York Times*. March 2, 2003. <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/03/02/weekinreview/the-nation-how-americans-link-iraq-and-sept-11.html>.